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NOW

VOLUME SIX

CONTENTS

GEORGE ORWELL.	*How the Poor Die.*	1
GEORGE WOODCOCK.	*Graham Greene.*	9
POEMS by HARRY ROSKOLENKO, KENNETH REXROTH, WREY GARDINER, PETER WELLS, WILLIAM EVERSON.		26
GEORGE BARKER.	*Sonnet to Jankel Adler.*	32
JANKEL ADLER.	*Reproductions of Four Paintings.*	Opposite p. 32
CAMILLO BERNERI.	*Nietzsche as Anti-Nietzsche.*	33
PAUL GOODMAN.	*Revolution, Sociolatry and War.*	43
JOHN HEWETSON.	*Beethoven and Liberty.*	51
HOLLEY CANTINE & DACHINE RAINER.	*Letter from New York.*	61
JULIAN SYMONS.	*The Condemned Playboy.*	66
ROY FULLER.	*From Phiz to Fildes.*	70

EDITED BY GEORGE WOODCOCK.

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George Orwell

How the Poor Die

In the year 1929 I spent several weeks in the Hopital X, in the fifteenth Arrondissement of Paris. The clerks put me through the usual third-degree at the reception desk, and indeed I was kept answering questions for some twenty minutes before they would let me in. If you have ever had to fill up forms in a Latin country you will know the kind of questions I mean. For some days past I had been unequal tc translating Reaumur into Fahrenheit, but I know that my temperature was round about 103, and by the end of the interview I had some difficulty in standing on my feet. At my back a resigned little knot of patients, carrying bundles done up in coloured handkerchiefs, waited their turn to be questioned.

After the questioning came the bath—a compulsory routine for all newcomers, apparently, just as in prison or the workhouse. My clothes were taken away from me, and after I had sat shivering for some minutes in five inches of warm water I was given a linen night-shirt and a short blue flannel dressing-gown—no slippers, they had none big enough for me, they said—and led out into the open air. This was a night in February and I was suffering from pneumonia. The ward we were going to was 200 yards away and it seemed that to get to it you had to cross the hospital grounds. Someone stumbled in front of me with a lantern. The gravel path was frosty underfoot, and the wind whipped the nightshirt round my bare calves. When we got into the ward I was aware of a strange feeling of familiarity whose origin I did not succeed in pinning down till later in the night. It was a long, rather low, ill-lit room, full of murmuring voices and with three rows of beds surprisingly close together. There was a foul smell, faecal and yet sweetish. As I lay down I saw on a bed nearly opposite me a small, round-shouldered, sandy-haired man sitting half naked while a doctor and a student performed some strange operation on him. First the doctor produced from his black bag a dozen small glasses like wine glasses, then the student burned a match inside each glass to exhaust the air, then the glass was popped on to the man's back or chest and the vacuum drew up a huge yellow blister. Only after some moments did I realise what they were doing to him. It was something called cupping, a treatment which you can read about in old medical textbooks but which till then I had vaguely thought of as one of those things they do to horses.

The cold air outside had probably lowered my temperature, and I watched this barbarous remedy with detachment and even a certain amount of amusement. The next moment, however, the doctor and

the student came across to my bed, hoisted me upright and without a word began applying the same set of glasses, which had not been sterilised in any way. A few feeble protests that I uttered got no more response than if I had been an animal. I was very much impressed by the impersonal way in which the two men started on me. I had never been in the public ward of a hospital before, and it was my first experience of doctors who handle you without speaking to you, or, in a human sense, taking any notice of you. They only put on six glasses in my case, but after doing so they scarified the blisters and applied the glasses again. Each glass now drew out about a dessert-spoonful of dark-coloured blood. As I lay down again, humiliated, disgusted and frightened by the thing that had been done to me, I reflected that now at least they would leave me alone. But no, not a bit of it. There was another treatment coming, the mustard poultice, seemingly a matter of routine like the hot bath. Two slatternly nurses had already got the poultice ready, and they lashed it round my chest as tight as a strait jacket while some men who were wandering about the ward in shirt and trousers began to collect round my bed with half-sympathetic grins. I learned later that watching a patient have a mustard poultice was a favourite pastime in the ward. These things are normally applied for a quarter of an hour and certainly they are funny enough if you don't happen to be the person inside. For the first five minutes the pain is severe, but you believe you can bear it. During the second five minutes this belief evaporates, but the poultice is buckled at the back and you can't get it off. This is the period the onlookers most enjoy. During the last five minutes, I noted, a sort of numbness supervenes. After the poultice had been removed a waterproof pillow packed with ice was thrust beneath my head and I was left alone. I did not sleep, and to the best of my knowledge this was the only night of my life—I mean the only night spent in bed—in which I have not slept at all, not even a minute.

During my first hour in the Hopital X I had had a whole series of different and contradictory treatments, but this was misleading, for in general you got very little treatment at all, either good or bad, unless you were ill in some interesting and instructive way. At five in the morning the nurses came round, woke the patients and took their temperatures, but did not wash them. If you were well enough you washed yourself, otherwise you depended on the kindness of some walking patient. It was generally patients, too, who carried the bedbottles and the grim bedpan, nicknamed *la casserole*. At eight breakfast arrived, called army-fashion *la soupe*. It was soup, too, a thin vegetable soup with slimy hunks of bread floating about in it. Later in the day the tall, solemn, black-bearded doctor made his rounds, with an interne and a troop of students following at his heels, but there were about sixty of us in the ward and it was evident that he had other wards to attend to as well. There were many beds past which he walked day after day, sometimes followed by imploring cries. On the other hand if you had some disease with which the students wanted to familiarise themselves you got plenty of attention of a kind. I myself, with an exceptionally fine specimen of a bronchial rattle.

sometimes had as many as a dozen students queuing up to listen to my chest. It was a very queer feeling—queer, I mean, because of their intense interest in learning their job, together with a seeming lack of any perception that the patients were human beings. It is strange to relate, but sometimes as some young student stepped forward to take his turn at manipulating you he would be actually tremulous with excitement, like a boy who has at last got his hands on some expensive piece of machinery. And then ear after ear—ears of young men, of girls, of negroes—pressed against your back, relays of fingers solemnly but clumsily tapping, and not from any one of them did you get a word of conversation or a look direct in your face. As a non-paying patient, in the uniform nightshirt, you were primarily *a specimen,* a thing I did not resent but could never quite get used to.

After some days I grew well enough to sit up and study the surrounding patients. The stuffy room, with its narrow beds so close together that you could easily touch your neighbour's hand, had every sort of disease in it except, I suppose, acutely infectious cases. My right-hand neighbour was a little red-haired cobbler with one leg shorter than the other, who used to announce the death of any other patient (this happened a number of times, and my neighbour was always the first to hear of it) by whistling to me, exclaiming "Numero 43!" (or whatever it was) and flinging his arms above his head. This man had not much wrong with him, but in most of the other beds within my angle of vision some squalid tragedy or some plain horror was being enacted. In the bed that was foot to foot with mine there lay, until he died (I didn't see him die—they moved him to another bed), a little weazened man who was suffering from I do not know what disease, but something that made his whole body so intensely sensitive that any movement from side to side, sometimes even the weight of the bedclothes, would make him shout out with pain. His worst suffering was when he urinated, which he did with the greatest difficulty. A nurse would bring him the bedbottle and then for a long time stand beside his bed, whistling, as grooms are said to do with horses, until at last with an agonised shriek of "*Je pisse!*" he would get started. In the bed next to him the sandy-haired man whom I had seen being cupped used to cough up blood-streaked mucus at all hours. My left-hand neighbour was a tall, flaccid-looking young man who used periodically to have a tube inserted into his back and astonishing quantities of frothy liquid drawn off from some part of his body. In the bed beyond that a veteran of the war of 1870 was dying, a handsome old man with a white imperial, round whose bed, at all hours when visiting was allowed, four elderly female relatives dressed all in black sat exactly like crows, obviously scheming for some pitiful legacy. In the bed opposite me in the further row was an old baldheaded man with drooping moustaches and greatly swollen face and body, who was suffering from some disease that made him urinate almost incessantly. A huge glass receptacle stood always beside his bed. One day his wife and daughter came to visit him. At sight of them the old man's bloated face lit up with a smile of surprising sweetness, and as his daughter, a pretty

girl of about twenty, approached the bed I saw that his hand was slowly working its way from under the bedclothes. I seemed to see in advance the gesture that was coming—the girl kneeling beside the bed, the old man's hand laid on her head in his dying blessing. But no, he merely handed her the bedbottle, which she promptly took from him and emptied into the receptacle.

About a dozen beds away from me was Numero 57—I think that was his number—a cirrhosis of the liver case. Everyone in the ward knew him by sight because he was sometimes the subject of a medical lecture. On two afternoons a week the tall, grave doctor would lecture in the ward to a party of students, and on more than one occasion old Numero 57 was wheeled on a sort of trolley into the middle of the ward, where the doctor would roll back his nightshirt, dilate with his fingers a huge flabby protuberance on the man's belly—the diseased liver, I suppose—and explain solemnly that this was a disease attributable to alcoholism, commoner in the wine-drinking countries. As usual he neither spoke to his patient nor gave him a smile, a nod or any kind of recognition. While he talked, very grave and upright, he would hold the wasted body beneath his two hands, sometimes giving it a gentle roll to and fro, in just the attitude of a woman handling a rolling-pin. Not that Numero 57 minded this kind of thing. Obviously he was an old hospital inmate, a regular exhibit at lectures, his liver long since marked down for a bottle in some pathological museum. Utterly uninterested in what was said about him, he would lie with his colourless eyes gazing at nothing, while the doctor showed him off like a piece of antique china. He was a man of about sixty, astonishingly shrunken. His face, pale as vellum, had shrunken away till it seemed no bigger than a doll's

One morning my cobbler neighbour woke me by plucking at my pillow before the nurses arrived. "Numero 57!"—he flung his arms above his head. There was a light in the ward, enough to see by. I could see old Numero 57 lying crumpled up on his side, his face sticking out over the side of the bed, and towards me. He had died some time during the night, nobody knew when. When the nurses came they received the news of his death indifferently and went about their work. After a long time, an hour or more, two other nurses marched in abreast like soldiers, with a great clumping of sabots, and knotted the corpse up in the sheets, but it was not removed till some time later. Meanwhile, in the better light, I had had time for a good look at Numero 57. Indeed I lay on my side to look at him. Curiously enough he was the first dead European I had seen. I had seen dead men before, but always Asiatics and usually people who had died violent deaths. Numero 57's eyes were still open, his mouth also open, his small face contorted into an expression of agony. What most impressed me however was the whiteness of his face. It had been pale before, but now it was little darker than the sheets. As I gazed at the tiny, screwed-up face it struck me that this disgusting piece of refuse, waiting to be carted away and dumped on a slab in the dissecting-room, was an example of "natural" death, one of the things you pray for in the Litany. There you are, then, I thought,

that's what is waiting for you, twenty, thirty, forty years hence: that is how the lucky ones die, the one who live to be old. One wants to live, of course, indeed one only stays alive by virtue of the fear of death, but I think now, as I thought then, that it's better to die violently and not too old. People talk about the horrors of war, but what weapon has man invented that even approaches in cruelty some of the commoner diseases? "Natural" death, almost by definition, means something slow, smelly and painful. Even at that, it makes a difference if you can achieve it in your own home and not in a public institution. This poor old wretch who had just flickered out like a candle-end was not even important enough to have anyone watching by his deathbed. He was merely a number, then a "subject" for the students' scalpels. And the sordid publicity of dying in such a place! In the Hopital X the beds were very close together and there were no screens. Fancy, for instance, dying like the little man whose bed was for a while foot to foot with mine, the one who cried out when the bedclothes touched him! I dare say "Je pisse!" were his last recorded words. Perhaps the dying don't bother about such things—that at least would be the standard answer: nevertheless dying people are often more or less normal in their minds till within a day or so of the end.

In the public wards of a hospital you see horrors that you don't seem to meet with among people who manage to die in their own homes, as though certain diseases only attacked people at the lower income levels. But it is a fact that you would not in any English hospitals see some of the things I saw in the Hopital X. This business of people just dying like animals, for instance, with nobody standing by, nobody interested, the death not even noticed till the morning—this happened more than once. You certainly would not see that in England, and still less would you see a corpse left exposed to the view of the other patients. I remember that once in a cottage hospital in England a man died while we were at tea, and though there were only six of us in the ward the nurses managed things so adroitly that the man was dead and his body removed without our even hearing about it till tea was over. A thing we perhaps underrate in England is the advantage we enjoy in having large numbers of well-trained and rigidly-disciplined nurses. No doubt English nurses are dumb enough, they may tell fortunes with tealeaves, wear Union Jack badges and keep photographs of the Queen on their mantelpieces, but at least they don't let you lie unwashed and constipated on an unmade bed, out of sheer laziness. The nurses at the Hopital X still had a tinge of Mrs. Gamp about them, and later, in the military hospitals of Republican Spain, I was to see nurses almost too ignorant to take a temperature. You wouldn't, either, see in England such dirt as existed in the Hopital X. Later on, when I was well enough to wash myself in the bathroom, I found that there was kept there a huge packing case into which the scraps of food and dirty dressings from the ward were flung, and the wainscotings were infested by crickets.

When I had got back my clothes and grown strong on my legs I fled from the Hopital X, before my time was up and without waiting

for a medical discharge. It was not the only hospital I have fled from, but its gloom and bareness, its sickly smell and, above all, something in its mental atmosphere stand out in my memory as exceptional. I had been taken there because it was the hospital belonging to my arrondissement, and I did not learn till after I was in it that it bore a bad reputation. A year or two later the celebrated swindler, Madame Hanaud, who was ill while on remand, was taken to the Hopital X, and after a few days of it she managed to elude her guards, took a taxi and drove back to the prison, explaining that she was more comfortable there. I have no doubt that the Hopital X was quite untypical of French hospitals even at that date. But the patients, nearly all of them working-men, were surprisingly resigned. Some of them seemed to find the conditions almost comfortable, for at least two were destitute malingerers who found this a good way of getting through the winter. The nurses connived because the malingerers made themselves useful by doing odd jobs. But the attitude of the majority was: of course this is a lousy place, but what else do you expect? It did not seem strange to them that you should be woken at five and then wait three hours before starting the day on watery soup, or that people should die with no one at their bedside, or even that your chance of getting medical attention should depend on catching the doctor's eye as he went past. According to their traditions that was what hospitals were like. If you are seriously ill, and if you are too poor to be treated in your own home, then you must go into hospital, and once there you must put up with harshness and discomfort, just as you would in the army. But on top of this I was interested to find a lingering belief in the old stories that have now almost faded from memory in England—stories, for instance, about doctors cutting you open out of sheer curiosity or thinking it funny to start operating before you were properly "under". There were dark tales about a little operating-room said to be situated just beyond the bathroom. Dreadful screams were said to issue from this room. I saw nothing to confirm these stories and no doubt they were all nonsense, though I did see two students kill a sixteen-year-old boy, or nearly kill him (he appeared to be dying when I left the hospital, but he may have recovered later) by a mischievous experiment which they probably could not have tried on a paying patient. Well within living memory it used to be believed in London that in some of the big hospitals patients were killed off to get dissection subjects. I didn't hear this tale repeated at the Hopital X, but I should think some of the men there would have found it credible. For it was a hospital in which not the methods, perhaps, but something of the atmosphere of the nineteenth century had managed to survive, and therein lay its peculiar interest.

During the past fifty years or so there has been a great change in the relationship between doctor and patient. If you look at almost any literature before the later part of the nineteenth century, you find that a hospital is popularly regarded as much the same thing as a prison, and an old-fashioned, dungeon-like prison at that. A hospital is a place of filth, torture and death, a sort of antechamber to the tomb.

No one who was not more or less destitute would have thought of going into such a place for treatment. And especially in the early part of the last century, when medical science had grown bolder than before without being any more successful, the whole business of doctoring was looked on with horror and dread by ordinary people. Surgery, in particular, was believed to be no more than a peculiarly gruesome form of sadism, and dissection, possible only with the aid of bodysnatchers, was even confused with necromancy. From the nineteenth century you could collect a large horror-literature connected with doctors and hospitals. Think of poor old George III, in his dotage, shrieking for mercy as he sees his surgeons approaching to "bleed him till he faints"! Think of the conversations of Bob Sawyer and Benjamin Allen, which no doubt are hardly parodies, or the field hospitals in *La Debâcle* and *War and Peace,* or that shocking description of an amputation in Melville's *Whitejacket*! Even the names given to doctors in nineteenth-century English fiction, Slasher, Carver, Sawyer, Fillgrave and so on, and the generic nickname "sawbones", are about as grim as they are comic. The anti-surgery tradition is perhaps best expressed in Tennyson's poem, *The Children's Hospital*, which is essentially a pre-chloroform document though it seems to have been written as late as 1880. Moreover, the outlook which Tennyson records in this poem had a lot to be said for it. When you consider what an operation without anæsthetics must have been like, what it notoriously *was* like, it is difficult not to suspect the motives of people who would undertake such things. For these bloody horrors which the students so eagerly looked forward to ("A magnificent sight if Slasher does it!") were admittedly more or less useless: the patient who did not die of shock usually died of gangrene, a result which was taken for granted. Even now doctors can be found whose motives are questionable. Anyone who has had much illness, or who has listened to medical students talking, will know what I mean. But anæsthetics were a turning point, and disinfectants were another. Nowhere in the world, probably, would you now see the kind of scene described by Axel Munthe in *The Story of San Michele,* when the sinister surgeon in top hat and frock coat, his starched shirtfront spattered with blood and pus, carves up patient after patient with the same knife and flings the severed limbs into a pile beside the table. Moreover, national health insurance has partly done away with the idea that a working-class patient is a pauper who deserves little consideration. Well into this century it was usual for "free" patients at the big hospitals to have their teeth extracted with no anæsthetic. They didn't pay, so why should they have an anæsthetic—that was the attitude. That too has changed.

And yet every institution will always bear upon it some lingering memory of its past. A barrack-room is still haunted by the ghost of Kipling, and it is difficult to enter a workhouse without being reminded of *Oliver Twist.* Hospitals began as a kind of casual ward for lepers and the like to die in, and they continued as places where medical students learned their art on the bodies of the poor. You can still catch a faint suggestion of their history in their characteristically gloomy

architecture. I would be far from complaining about the treatment I have received in any English hospital, but I do know that it is a sound instinct that warns people to keep out of hospitals if possible, and especially out of the public wards. Whatever the legal position may be, it is unquestionable that you have far less control over your own treatment, far less certainty that frivolous experiments will not be tried on you, when it is a case of "accept the discipline or get out". And it is a great thing to die in your own bed, though it is better still to die in your boots. However great the kindness and the efficiency, in every hospital death there will be some cruel, squalid detail, something perhaps too small to be told but leaving terribly painful memories behind, arising out of the haste, the crowding, the impersonality of a place where every day people are dying among strangers.

The dread of hospitals probably still survives among the very poor, and in all of us it has only recently disappeared. It is a dark patch not far beneath the surface of our minds. I have said earlier that when I entered the ward at the Hopital X I was conscious of a strange feeling of familiarity. What the scene reminded me of, of course, was the reeking, pain-filled hospitals of the nineteenth century, which I had never seen but of which I had a traditional knowledge. And something, perhaps the black-clad doctor with his frowsy black bag, or perhaps only the sickly smell, played the queer trick of unearthing from my memory that poem of Tennyson's, *The Children's Hospital*, which I had not thought of for twenty years. It happened that as a child I had had it read aloud to me by a sick-nurse whose own working life might have stretched back to the time when Tennyson wrote the poem. The horrors and sufferings of the old-style hospitals were a vivid memory to her. We had shuddered over the poem together, and then seemingly I had forgotten it. Even its name would probably have recalled nothing to me. But the first glimpse of the ill-lit, murmurous room, with the beds so close together, suddenly roused the train of thought to which it belonged, and in the night that followed I found myself remembering the whole story and atmosphere of the poem, with many of its lines complete.

George Woodcock

Graham Greene

Graham Greene stands somewhat aloof among the writers who people the same literary landscape. Like Aldous Huxley in a previous decade, he has retained the respect of intellectuals while adapting a popular form so successfully that his novels have become accepted among circulating library readers and film audiences as good stories even when their moral intention is ignored. Almost alone among his contemporaries of the 1930's, he was little influenced by Communism, but he has never let his just dislike of Marxist ideas and practice lead him into hatred of individual Communists. He has embraced Catholicism in his manhood, yet his work contains none of that hysteria which characterised a previous generation of converts, and he has always shown a feeling for the oppressed and a concern for individual freedom of belief not generally associated with the church to which he adheres.

Nevertheless, he has remained a steadfast Catholic, and his work has been devoted more and more to the evolution, out of Catholicism, of a consistent attitude towards a chaotic world. He is a Catholic propagandist, but this has never prevented him from being a good novelist or an indignant critic of injustice. Paradoxically, his is an essentially humanist attitude; his religion is always made manifest in man.

Greene's novels might be described as a panorama of twentieth century violence. Except his first book, *The Man Within,* they all portray in one way or another the world-wide struggle of creeds and ways of life which culminated in the last great war. There are many variants of this theme of violent struggle. *The Confidential Agent* describes the intrigues of rival agents of two sides in a country split by civil war, who are both trying to obtain coal in England; *Stamboul Train* ends in the death of a revolutionary who goes back to his own country and is shot by the police at the border; *Brighton Rock* is dominated by two themes of conflict, the underworld strife between gangs of petty crooks, and the pursuit of a murderer by an honest woman with ideas about justice; *The Power and The Glory* reveals the attempt by Mexican Communists to prevent by terror the free teaching of Christianity; and so on in varying scenes and plots down to the last and weakest novel, *The Ministry of Fear,* where the hero, haunted by guilt for killing his wife to prevent her continued suffering from an incurable disease, becomes the unwitting victim and final outwitter of a gang of international spies. Even *The Man Within,*

although it is acted in an eighteenth century setting of smugglers and revenue men, is shown in the same colours of violence and struggle, and its clothing in a past dress merely represents Greene's original desire to evade the urgency of the chaos around him.

But it would be superficial to claim that Greene's novels are concerned merely with displaying the violence of modern life, that they have no better purpose and serve no greater end than an authentic thriller like, say, *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*. Greene has adopted much from the method and form of the thriller, a type of novel which has no justification beyond the appeal of brutality. But his borrowings have been technical merely; there is nothing in his work resembling the sheer amorality of the American pulp thriller. He never in any way accepts violence, but uses the thriller form in order to investigate it, to search for its roots in the human heart, and to subject it to a moral judgment. This approach is shown clearly in a passage from *Journey Without Maps*, his account of travel in Liberia.

> "To-day our world seems peculiarly susceptible to brutality. There is a touch of nostalgia in the pleasure we take in gangster novels, in characters who have so agreeably simplified their emotions that they have begun living at a level below the cerebral. We, like Wordsworth, are living after a war and a revolution, and these half-castes fighting with bombs between the cliffs of skyscrapers seem more likely than one to be aware of Proteus rising from the sea. It is not, of course, that one wishes to stay for ever at that level, but when one sees to what unhappiness, to what peril of extinction centuries of cerebration have brought us, one sometimes has a curiosity to discover if one can from what we have come, to recall at what point we went astray."

Greene sees the violence of the modern world not merely as a social phenomenon. For him it is connected with an underlying theological conception of the struggle of good and evil, and until we have grasped the importance in Greene's mind of this struggle of Divine and Satanic influences, it is useless to attempt to understand his work. The working out of this central theme does not, as some critics seem to have assumed, represent the whole of Greene's intention. Indeed, as I hope to show later, his most important contribution to contemporary writing lies outside the Mithraic drama. But at this point it is necessary to understand Greene's preoccupation with evil.

The world we live in contains such a preponderance of evil acts and events that it is difficult to avoid a feeling, however irrational, that evil exists as a real and autonomous force in the universe. It is all too easy to see a positive evil at work every day and in every part of our world. It is difficult to believe in God, but not so difficult to believe in the Devil. The creative aspects of the universe may lie all about us, but it is the dark urges against human love and dignity that move with the greatest noise in our lives and occupy always the central point in our vision.

Once we have become convinced of positive evil, it is not so difficult to learn to believe in good. Once we have given a name to the violence that surrounds us, it does not appear such a universally bewildering phenomenon, and we can perceive that there are many things in the universe untouched by evil, evading or even resisting it successfully. We perceive the presence of a positive good co-existent

with evil, a good that balances and fights against evil. And, seeing good and evil present in the world and in ourselves, we are easily inclined to believe in the personification of these qualities, to accept Ormuzd and Abriham, the Devil and afterwards God. Once we have gone thus far, it is even more easy to become involved in the maze of theological rationalisation and to end by accepting the least credible doctrines of the Roman Church. It is a cerebral process—in such a religion there is little of the intuitive, less of the mystic, but perhaps for that very reason more of the humanist.*

Of his own development in this direction Greene tells us, "I am a Catholic with an intellectual if not an emotional belief in Catholic dogma," and, again, "I had not been converted to a religious faith. I had been convinced by specific arguments of the probability of its creed." Elsewhere he remarks, "once accept God and the reason should carry you further, but to accept nothing at all—that requires some stubbornness, some courage."

The consciousness of evil entered early into Greene's mind. At first, in childhood, he was conscious less of evil than of the ubiquity of a "power", that was present everywhere, but particularly in horrifying things or scenes. In his journey to Africa, among the animist tribes of the Liberian hinterland, with their magical conception of a world permeated with a similar "power" neither good nor evil, but menacing, he recovered these early impressions sufficiently clearly to record them.

> "It is the earliest dream that I can remember, earlier than the witch at the corner of the nursery passage, this dream of something outside that has to come in. The witch, like the masked dancers, has form, but this is simply power, a force exerted on a door, an influence that drifted after me upstairs and pressed against windows.
>
> "Later the presence took many odd forms: a troop of black-skinned girls who carried poison flowers it was death to touch; an old Arab; a half-caste; armed men with shaven heads and narrow eyes and the appearance of Thibetans out of a travel book; a Chinese detective.
>
> "You couldn't call these things evil, as Peter Quint in *The Turn of the Screw* was evil, with his carroty hair and his white face of damnation. That story of James's belongs to the Christian, the orthodox imagination. Mine were devils only in the African sense of beings who controlled power. They were not even always terrifying . . .
>
> "It was only many years later that Evil came into my dreams; the man with gold teeth and rubber surgical gloves; the old woman with ringworm; the man with his throat cut dragging himself across the carpet to the bed."

It is significant from this passage that evil for Greene is essentially human, connected directly with man's cruelty or misery.

It was when at school that the reality of evil began to impose itself on his mind, at that age in adolescence when we are all liable to become concerned with the religious emotions and to have visions of God or the Devil. Greene was the son of the headmaster of a small public school. He was also a pupil, and the alternation of the weekday life of school, the realm of evil, and the weekend life of the

*Personally I regard this attitude as the development of a fundamental error that regards evil as a quality existing in its own right. But this is a personal intrusion, merely to show that the line of reasoning I have endeavoured to explain is one which I do not accept as valid.

headmaster's house, the realm of good, gave birth to that duality of attitude to the resolution of which Greene has devoted much of his thought. In *The Lawless Roads* he describes these early experiences.

> "One was an inhabitant of both countries: on Saturday and Sunday afternoons of one side of the baize door, the rest of the week of the other. How can life on a border be other than restless? You are pulled by different ties of hate and love. For hate is quite as powerful a tie: it demands allegiance. In the land of the skyscrapers, of stone stairs and cracked bells ringing early, one was aware of fear and hate, a kind of lawlessness—appalling cruelties could be practised without a second thought: one met for the first time characters, adult and adolescent, who bore about them the genuine quality of evil."

For such unfortunates, Greene remarks, "Hell lay about them in their infancy," and it was of this hell that his first belief was born.

> "And so faith came to one—shapelessly, without dogma, a presence above a croquet lawn, something associated with violence, cruelty, evil across the way. One began to believe in heaven because one believed in hell, but for a long while it was hell only one could picture with a certain intimacy—the pitchpine partitions in dormitories where everybody was never quiet at the same time: lavatories wthout locks: 'There, by reason of the great number of the damned, the prisoners are heaped together in their awful prison . . .'; walks in pairs up the metroland road, no solitude anywhere, at any time. The Anglican church could not supply the same intimate symbols for heaven: only a big brass eagle, an organ voluntary, 'Lord dismiss us with thy blessing', the quiet croquet lawn where one had no business, the rabbit and the distant music.
>
> "These were primary symbols: life later altered them: in a midland city, riding on trams in winter past the Gothic hotel, the super-cinema, the sooty newspaper office where we worked at night, passing the single professional prostitute trying to keep the circulation going under the blue and powdered skin, one began slowly, painfully, reluctantly, to populate heaven. The Mother of God took the place of the brass eagle; one began to have a dim conception of the appalling mysteries of love moving through a ravaged world—the Curé d'Ars admitting to his mind all the impurity of a province: Péguy challenging God in the cause of the damned. It remained something one associated with misery, violence, evil . . ."

It is the particular preoccupation with "misery, violence, evil," that characterises Greene's novels. Other modern novelists are concerned with violence, but for them it is almost a sickness of the heart that makes violence necessary. Hemingway, for instance, with his connoisseur's interest in the bullfight, his gloating over the blood and guts of the arena, has little in common with Greene. For Greene, violence is a symptom of the condition of man, to be examined, to be revealed, but also to be related to the context of a universal struggle between good and evil. Hemingway's world of violence is a dream of black and white images that have no genuine connection with the grey shadows of the living world. But the life of Greene's novels does represent the actual violence and misery of the world in which we live, and recognises that evil is practiced by ordinary, weak men and women. Greene enters into the hearts of those who act this drama of hate and love, and pities both the practicioner and the victim.

There are very few of his characters who are wholly evil. All, like the men and women of the world in which we live, are partly good, and none is so good that he is not capable of some lapse of conduct that will bring about evil. Perhaps it would be even more

correct to say that they are not in themselves either good or evil, but the agents through whom these powers work, the unworthy and half-conscious vessels that carry grace or the equally precious poison of damnation. In *The Ministry of Fear* Greene says, "the devil—and God too—had always used comic people, futile people, little suburban natures and the maimed and warped to serve his purposes. When God used them you talked emptily of nobility and when the devil used them of wickedness; but the material was only dull shabby human mediocrity in either case."

It is from these warped, shabby and futile people, from the great half-world of the "seedy" that Greene has drawn the characters to people his Persian drama. Of such it is recorded that Christ formed his ministry.

Greene's novels, up to *The Power and The Glory,* represent a steady development of this theme of the struggle in the world and within the human spirit. It is a war that has no accepted frontiers, where either side will project its forces into the most unexpected sector, where the man who seems evil will bring forth good, where the apparent achievement of good will end in evil. Raven, the killer in *A Gun for Sale,* seems a character dedicated from childhood wholly to evil. Yet circumstances turn him into an avenging instrument against those who used him for a murder to start a war, and his final killings avert the international tragedy. The plot of *It's a Battlefield* is built around a reprieve for a man who killed a policeman in a Communist demonstration. Despite the weakness of the men and women who maintain it, despite the personal and political motives with which it is mingled, the campaign for this reprieve appears to be good in its aim. Yet when, unexpectedly, the reprieve is granted, it appears as a tragedy, because it leaves the convict's wife tied for the rest of her life to a man in prison whom she loves passionately but to whom she cannot hope to be faithful. Ironically, it is also granted too late to prevent Drover's brother from being killed by a car while he is attempting to assassinate the Commissioner of Police. In *Brighton Rock* Pinky, the adolescent murderer, for all his faith in God, deliberately chooses evil. In *The Power and The Glory* the drunkard priest becomes the instrument of God's grace, the agent of good's resistance to evil.

The emphasis is increased from novel to novel, and, until *Brighton Rock,* the struggle is fought in terms of human situations, of plots and thrilling chases, of sensational news stories, of international crime and civil war. In even so remote a novel as *The Man Within* the theme of violence is present, and the human conflict is marked out in the series of betrayals to which Andrews is led, the betrayal of his smuggler comrades to the law, the betrayal of the woman he loves when he allows lust for another woman to persuade him into giving evidence at the trial, and the final expiation when, after one of the smugglers has killed his woman in revenge, he gives himself up as the murderer.

The remaining novels are all comprised within the pattern of violence that lies about us in the modern world. The forces of evil

are often represented in the inhuman organisations and purposes that promote such violence—the armaments ring that pays Raven in *A Gun for Sale,* Krogh's financial schemes in *England Made Me,* the reactionary conspiracy in *The Confidential Agent.* Some of the characters are made by their natures to be the instruments of evil, like Raven and Pinky, others are the almost predestined victims, "caught up in other people's darkness," like Anthony Farrant in *England Made Me* and the child Else in *The Confidential Agent.* In a sense, indeed, all his characters are victims of the general tragedy, for to none of them comes earthly happiness or human triumph. The nearest to achievement, the nearest to God, are those, like the priest in *The Power and The Glory,* or Rose Cullen in *The Confidential Agent,* or the other Rose in *Brighton Rock,* who have sacrificed something—life, a secure future on earth, the hope of salvation in heaven—for the sake of love, who have realised trust and have rejected the treachery of a hating world.

Peace comes to the confidential agent, travelling to his death, in a reassertion of confidence in a human being.

> "He said: 'I'm an old man.'
>
> "'If I don't care,' she said, 'What does it matter what you are? Oh, I know you're faithful—but I've told you I shan't go on loving a dead man.' He took a quick look at her; her hair was lank with spray. She looked older than he had ever seen her yet—plain. It was as if she were assuring him that glamour didn't enter into *this* business. She said: 'When you're dead, she can have you. I can't compete then—and we'll all be dead a long, long time.'
>
> "The light went by astern: ahead there was only the splash, the long withdrawal and the dark. She said, 'You'll be dead very soon: you needn't tell me that, but *now* . . .'
>
> "He felt no desire, and no claim: happiness was all about them on the small vibrating tramp. To the confidential agent trust seemed to be returning into the violent and suspicious world."

In the earlier novels the problems are treated in terms of human relationships, of loyalties and betrayals between men, of violence done by and to men in struggles which have their place in the natural world. The Catholic church is hardly mentioned, although Greene had already belonged to it for some years, and the standards of good and evil are those of the kingdom of nature, of ordinary human ideas of right and wrong, of justice and injustice.

But in *Brighton Rock* a profound change appears, for here is brought in the factor of belief. Our world is no longer one of plain right or wrong, of natural justice and injustice. We are introduced to theological conceptions of grace and damnation; good and evil become three-dimensional because they cannot be considered by human moralities of right and wrong. Because she believes in God's grace, even though she deliberately chooses damnation, Rose, who loves the murderer, is shown to be raised on a higher plane of consciousness than the good-timing Ida, who knows what is right and sets out with a Mosaic insistence to get her revenge for the killing of a man she had met once on a Brighton afternoon. Ida, like the conventional world she represents, has not gone beyond the Judaic conceptions of justice. The girl accepts what she thinks to

be damnation because she has attained the Christian conception of grace.

Here we come again to Greene's paradox of the salvation of the damned, represented in the priest's remarks to Rose during her confession after Pinky's death.

> "The old man suddenly began to talk—whistling every now and then and blowing eucalyptus through the grill. He said: 'There was a man, a Frenchman, you wouldn't know about him, my child, who had the same idea as you. He was a good man, a holy man, and he lived in sin all through his life, because he could not bear the idea that any soul could suffer damnation.' She listened with astonishment. He said: 'This man decided that if any soul was going to be damned, he would be damned too. He never took the sacraments, he never married his wife in church. I don't know, my child, but some people think he was—well, a saint. I think he died in what we are told is mortal sin—I'm not sure; it was in the war; perhaps . . .' He sighed—and whistled, bending his old head. He said: You can't conceive, my child, nor can I or anyone—the . . . appalling . . . strangeness of the mercy of God.' "

Pinky, who commits two murders with calculated brutality, who abuses selfishly the devotion of his girl and his friends, is the one character of Greene's creation who seems completely evil. He assuredly is one of those for whom "Hell lay about them in their infancy," and who carried his hell with him ever after. He has almost no redeeming quality, but arouses our pity for his pathetic self-assurance, his precocious cynicism which covers a deep fear of himself, of all his instincts and impulses. Believing in the Catholic dogmas implicitly, the boy deliberately commits one mortal sin after another and rejoices perversely in the thought of his own damnation. "Credo in unum Satanum" he boasts.

Satanism plays a consistent part in Green's novels. The old priest in *Brighton Rock* declares, "a Catholic is more capable of evil than anyone. I think perhaps—because we believe in him—we are more in touch with the devil than other people." And the priest in *The Power and The Glory* says in prison, "I know—from experience—how much beauty Satan carried down within him when he fell. Nobody ever said the fallen angels were the ugly ones. Oh no, they were just as quick and bright and . . ."

But it would be a mistake to imagine that, because Greene is to some extent "of the devil's party without knowing it," he is a wholehearted Satanist, a hearty partisan of evil. On the contrary, his interest in sinners and the damned seems to arise from his desire for all men to attain salvation.

Yet, for all our pity, we can find little to redeem Pinky. In his whole career and his sordid death, evil seems the triumphant force, consciously driving him to physical destruction and eternal damnation.

If *Brighton Rock* represents the triumph of evil within the human heart, *The Power and The Glory* shows the reverse, the attainment of God's good through the unworthy agency of a "whisky" priest who carries on his work in a Mexican state where the Catholic church is proscribed and a price is put upon his own head. The priest escapes over the border into another state where he will be immune, but

returns to his death in response to a call to administer the sacrament to a dying man.

The final spiritual conclusion of *The Power and The Glory* seems to be that within man himself evil and good must always be to some degree intermingled—no man will be wholly good or wholly evil—but the most unworthy man can become the agent by which God's will is carried out and good brought to mankind. In other words, the conflict which entered the Roman church when it absorbed Mithraic and Manichean dualism has been resolved, and sin is seen, as Christ himself saw it, to be an essential factor in the development of the human spirit. Man cannot be wholly good, nor is it desirable that he should be without experience of sin, for the greatest good comes often from those who have an intimate knowledge of evil. It will be remembered that Dante reserved a special part of hell for those who had led blameless lives, placing them below those sinners who had the opportunity to pass through purgatory into heaven.

In reaching this conclusion Greene seems to have found himself at the end of his development, or at least at the end of a major line of development. The novels up to *The Power and The Glory* show the steady unfolding of the theme of good and evil. In this last book good emerges from evil, like a flower from corruption. The pattern of a world where good and evil are mingled inextricably is completed, and we have reached a destination.

How completely Greene had worked out this theme is seen by a consideration of *The Ministry of Fear,* which succeeded *The Power and The Glory.* This is an "entertainment", the title Greene gives to his lighter novels. But while the earlier "entertainments", like *Stamboul Train,* seem as significant as most of the novels of other writers, and appear to fit into the general pattern of Greene's development, *The Ministry of Fear* has a thinness of quality and plot, a lack of evident purpose, which distinguish it from the preceding novels. The old theme of good and evil is repeated, and we find many of the devices of technique and plot which occur in the previous novels —the hunted man, the international spy ring, the atmosphere of pervading violence, are all familiar. But this time, instead of serving an end, they appear almost as theatrical devices to form an interesting story, but of little greater significance. The story is certainly exciting, but that is almost all, and, except for one or two faint religious echoes of *The Power and The Glory,* there is no indication of any urgent philosophical purpose. Nor are we aware to any marked extent of the pertinent social criticism which plays such a notable part in the earlier books. More than any other of Greene's books, *The Ministry of Fear* is a simple thriller, and it shows a dangerous tendency to become too much involved in a technique which was admirable when disciplined by a purpose, but which might lead to empty virtuosity when used without any external discipline of intent.

However, it is still probable that Greene will find a new theme of development, or even a variant of the old theme, which will enable him once again to write fruitful novels.

II

Before we proceed from the philosophical to the social aspects of Greene's novels, we should pay some brief attention to the two books of travel, *Journey without Maps* and *The Lawless Roads,* which act almost as the keys to an understanding of his development. It is in these volumes that most of Greene's autobiographical statements are made, and many references and reflections which greatly assist the interpretation of his novels.

Travels have a great significance in religious imagery, and the psychic life of man is represented in many of the early myths concerning long journeys. Of the first we have only to remember *The Dark Night of the Soul* and *Pilgrim's Progress,* of the second *The Odyssey,* to see the symbolic importance of the idea of journeying in the minds of men who are perhaps no more than a hundred generations from the nomad life.

In a similar way, Greene's journeys are far more than mere travels from place to place, or tours of sightseeing in strange lands. Each has a rich emotional significance, each becomes associated with a further stage in his inner journey of awareness.

Journey without Maps is concerned with a trip in Liberia, when Greene travelled far into the interior of that little-known country and mingled with tribes who still live at a primitive level of human existence. Among them Greene found much that was attractive after the complicated evil and violence of modern "civilised" life.

> "However tired I became of the seven-hour trek through the untidy and unbeautiful forest, I never wearied of the villages in which I spent the night: the sense of a small courageous community barely existing above the desert of trees, hemmed in by a sun too fierce to work under and a darkness filled with evil spirits—love was an arm round a neck, a cramped embrace in the smoke, wealth a little pile of palm-nuts, old-age sores and leprosy, religion a few stones in the centre of the village where the dead chiefs lay, a grove of trees where the rice birds, like yellow and green canaries, built their nests, a man in a mask with raffia skirts dancing at burials. This never varied, only their kindness to strangers, the extent of their poverty and the immediacy of their terrors. Their laughter and their happiness were the most courageous things in nature. Love, it has been said, was invented in Europe by the troubadours, but it existed here without the trappings of civilisation. They were tender towards their children (I seldom heard a crying child, unless at the sight of a white face, and never saw one beaten); they were tender towards each other in a muffled way; they didn't scream or 'rag'; they never revealed the rasped nerves of the European poor in shrill speech or sudden blows. One was aware the whole time of a standard of courtesy to which it was one's responsibility to conform."

Although he could never make real contact, never return, Greene felt a real nostalgia for this lost childhood of the race. He had seen a stage of man's history when, in spite of all the disease and dirt and fear, life was somehow more pure than in the stone forests of Western cities.

> "This journey, if it had done nothing else, had reinforced a sense of disappointment with what man had made out of the primitive, what he had made out of childhood. Oh, one wanted to protest, one doesn't believe, of course, in 'the visionary gleam', in the trailing glory, but there was something in that early terror and the bareness of one's needs, a harp

> strumming behind a hut, a witch on the nursery landing, a handful of kola nuts, a masked dancer, the poisoned flowers. The sense of taste was finer, the sense of pleasure keener, the sense of terror deeper and purer . . .
>
> "It isn't that one wants to stay in Africa; I have no yearning for a mindless sexuality, even if it were to be found there: it is only that when one had appreciated such a beginning, its terrors as well as its placidity, the power as well as the gentleness, the pity for what we have done with ourselves is driven more forcibly home."

The effect of Greene's African journey was to make him even more aware of the presence of evil in the world. The misery, the exploitation, the general air of decay and drabness, all combined to give the feeling of a world in which evil was imminent and powerful. In the closing paragraph of a short story, *A Chance for Mr. Lever*, Greene remarks,

> "The story might very well have encouraged *my* faith in that loving omniscience if it had not been shaken by personal knowledge of the drab empty forest through which Mr. Lever now went so merrily, where it is impossible to believe in any spiritual life, in anything outside the nature dying round you, the shrivelling of the weeds."

Returning from this primitive childhood of terror and dirt, Greene found the western world alive with a more active wickedness, the "sense of supernatural evil" replaced by "the small human viciousness" which spreads to embrace a world in war.

From this mood arose *Brighton Rock*, that formidable picture of the jungle of Christian evil. The return to an apprehension of the superabundance of God's grace is represented by another journey, which Greene made to Mexico just before the war, and which is described in *The Lawless Roads*.

In Mexico he found in progress one version of the struggle between the individual and the state which has been going on over the world for the whole of our century. In Mexico this struggle was often maintained by priests of the Roman church, men individually courageous and devoted to the service of their beliefs, which they have often sustained against great persecution at the hands of the authoritarian "communists" who have governed parts of Mexico.

Greene saw Mexico as the epitome of a world where personal faith struggles against the mechanical and organised mindlessness of an authoritarian society.

> "The world is all of a piece of course; it is engaged everywhere in the same subterranean struggle, lying like a tiny neutral state with whom no one ever observes their treaties between the two eternities of pain and—God knows the opposite of pain, not us. It is a Belgium fought over by friend and enemy alike; there is no peace anywhere where there is human life; but there are, I told myslf, quiet and active sectors of the line. Russia, Spain, Mexico—there's no fraternisation on Christmas morning in those parts. The horror may be the same, it is an intrinsic part of human life in every place; it attacks you in the Strand or the tropics; but where the eagles are gathered together, it is not unnatural to expect to find the Son of Man as well. So many years have passed in England since the war began between faith and anarchy; we live in an ugly indifference."

Here Greene, like so many others, fails to see that the difference is not between faith and "anarchy", for anarchy, the condition of being subject to no external authority, is the only state in which a personal faith can be born and nurtured. The authoritarian structure

of the church has led him to ignore the fact that *any* kind of government, spiritual or temporal, is liable to become an enemy of a personal and independent attitude to the universe, which is the prerequisite of a true and living faith. This is all the more tragic, because in the same book he shows a sound distaste for temporal authority.

> "One thought of the blue-chinned politicians on the balcony, the leaders of the State, with their eyes on the main chance, the pistols on their hips, with no sense of responsibility for anyone at all . . . I remembered the game they were playing at home with counters and dice called 'Monopoly', the girl of fifteen on the railway-line, a world where the politicians stand on the balcony, where the land is sold for building estates and the little villas go up on the wounded clay with garages like tombs."

I know little of the rights and wrongs of the Mexican quarrel between the "communist" politicians and the Roman church. In their day the Church and many of its dignitaries certainly made themselves fat on their pastorate—a fact which Greene does not deny—and the influence of the priests helped to keep the *peons* in ignorance. No doubt to the genuine revolutionaries like Magon the church appeared rightly as part of the structure of oppression, and they fought against it and the corrupt priests for that reason. But the situation is not as simple as that. Not all the priests were corrupt—many were simple and honest men who really believed in their teachings and acted as friends to the poor among whom they lived. On the other hand, the politicians who climbed to power on the pretence of revolution were not opposed to the church as an authority, but as a *rival* authority, and wished to destroy the Catholic faith because they dared not risk the presence of any belief, even among individuals, that might be a danger to their own system of authority. Without taking sides, it might be safe to sympathise with the individual peasant against the organised church and the individual Catholic against the organised state, to condemn both organisations equally and to support the right of both individuals to freedom from external dictation.

In Mexico Greene's imagination was fired by the story of a drunken priest, who had evaded the authorities for many months while continuing to propagate his faith in flight and hiding. The priest was eventually caught and shot, having, for all the apparent unworthiness of his life, been the only man to carry on his mission among the peasants and labourers of the villages of his province. In this story Greene saw a parable of how goodness can come even from a man whose character appears to be unworthy. Out of this he made the plot of *The Power and The Glory* which, as I have already shown, represents the peak of his literary development up to the present time.

III

I have shown that Greene, even in his portrayal of the spiritual struggle of good and evil, is concerned with the actual violence of human life. There is nothing mystical or even truly symbolic about his work. Good and evil are expressed in the lives of men, and it is in the map of a concrete world torn by violence and fratricidal dissension that we see the lines of the spiritual conflict traced most

clearly. To Greene it is a moral conflict, even more than a conflict of the soul; it is centred in the relationships of men, and is manifest in terms of betrayal and loyalty, of cruelty and love.

With such an attitude, it is not surprising that Greene's novels show a developed social consciousness. Greene has been abused by Marxists for lacking this very quality, but that is almost entirely because he does not accept their social criteria, and, although I disagree with many of Greene's ideas—particularly his theological dogmas—I consider that he has a much fuller sense of social values than most of his critics.

Greene's novels form, within obvious limits, one of the most comprehensive surveys of modern social violence that has yet been made in European fiction. They show clearly the nature of the class struggle in modern society, and also go beyond the Marxists to a realisation of that even more fundamental struggle, in progress throughout the world to-day, between the individual and the collective, the common man and the state.

Greene has been called reactionary from all sides, yet it is difficult to see how this impression could have been gained from an honest survey of his work. Always he is in sympathy with the underdog, with the criminal against the society that has warped him, with the rebel against the representatives of authority, with the poor against the rich and the meek against the mighty. In *The Lawless Roads* he quotes with approval the words of St. James:

> "Go to now, ye rich men: weep and howl in your miseries which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you and shall eat your flesh like fire . . ."

"These," says Greene, "are the words of revolution," and it is with something of this levelling spirit of the early fathers that Greene faces the modern world.

In almost every novel we find the exposure of some manifestation of tyranny or exploitation. In *England Made Me* it is monopoly capitalism and international finance, personified in Krogh; in *Stamboul Train* it is political tyranny in the Balkans; in *A Gun for Sale* it is the armaments industry with its plots to start wars for the extension of profits; in *The Confidential Agent,* in spite of Greene's Catholicism, it is the intrigues of the reactionaries in a civil war that smells very much of Spain; in *The Power and The Glory* it is the intolerance of modern totalitarianism towards any thought that offers a resistance to uniformity; in every book it is the state, big business, the law, the police, and the whole sophistry of money and power on which contemporary political life is built.

For those who still contend that Greene is a man without social conscience, I will be content with the quotation of one passage from *Journey without Maps*:

> " 'Workers of the World Unite'; I thought of the wide shallow slogans of political parties, as the thin bodies, every rib showing, with dangling swollen elbows or pock-marked skin, went by me to the market; why should one pretend to talk in terms of the world when we mean only Europe or the white races? Neither I.L.P. nor Communist Party urges a

strike in England because the plate-layers in Sierra Leone are paid sixpence a day without their food. Civilisation in West Africa remains exploitation: we have hardly improved the natives' lot at all, they are as worn out with fever as before the white man came, we have introduced new diseases and weakened their resistance to the old—they still drink from polluted water and suffer from the same worms, they are still at the mercy of their chiefs, for what can a District Commissioner really know, shifted from district to district, picking up only a few words of the language, dependent on an interpreter? Civilisation so far as Sierra Leone is concerned is the railway to Pendambu, the increased export of palm nuts; civilisation, too, is Lever Brothers and the prices they control; civilisation is the long bar in the Grand, the sixpenny wages."

But Greene's radicalism, his revulsion from the values of a capitalist civilisation, do not throw him into the arms of some comforting collective creed, some political dogmatism that dessicates all human values and leads by high-sounding words to a result not much better than the evil state it sought to replace.

"It's typical of Mexico, of the whole human race perhaps," he says, "—violence in favour of an ideal and then the ideal lost and the violence just going on."

And in *The Confidential Agent* the old intellectual D. realises that the revolutionaries for whom he is fighting are in reality little nearer to a really revolutionary attitude to human relationships than their reactionary opponents.

The struggle in Greene's novels is not that of class against class, of political organisation against political organisation. It is the guerilla war of the individual, the isolated man against a restrictive society. Greene's hero is the man hunted by society, who often at the same time takes on the rôle of the avenger for the evils which society forces on the millions of individual men who struggle under its collective oppression.

This pattern of the lone hero, hunter and hunted at once, occurs continually in his novels. The Confidential Agent is hunted by his enemies and by the British police, but when the little servant girl Else, whom he has pitied and befriended, is murdered by his pursuers, he himself turns into the hunter and takes his revenge on K., the teacher who has turned sides for money. Raven, the killer in *A Gun for Sale,* has murdered a European statesman for an armaments ring, and then is "framed" by his employers when they pay with marked notes and inform the police that the money was stolen in a hold-up. He discovers the trick, and, with the police on his track, goes for his revenge. He exposes the plot, kills the steel magnates, and then is killed at the last moment by his own pursuers. Pinky in *Brighton Rock* hunts and kills the reporter Fred who had betrayed his friend Kite into the hands of a rival gang, but is himself pursued by Fred's friend Ida, and driven to suicide.

The pattern is not unvaried. The priest in *The Power and The Glory* pursues no victim. Dr. Czinner is not hunted by any tangible enemy, and yet is driven on by his own feeling of solidarity with the revolutionary workers in his Balkan city to go back and place himself in the hands of his enemies, the Political Police who are awaiting him on the frontier of his country.

In a sense, the fate of Czinner is an anticipation of that of the priest, for both go voluntarily to seek death at the hands of their foes, and in both of them this seeming defeat is a kind of triumph, for the priest by his death wins the conversion of a young boy who had previously been immersed in the creed of the collective party, while the death of Czinner makes an indelible impression on the mind of the chorus girl Coral, and incidentally saves her from becoming the mistress of the unpleasant merchant, Myatt. The triumph of good over evil comes more often and more effectively from non-resistance than from counter-violence; in the long run the moral victory is more effective than the physical.

This representation of the social struggle as one of the individual against society leads Greene to find his protagonists among those who have already been marked from birth for unhappiness, men and women who live for some reason on the periphery, who are branded by oddness and destined by some original failing to be the misfits who carry on the perpetual war of human rebellion against the inhumanity of the collective. Andrews, in *The Man Within,* is subjected to the mockery of his smuggler father because he prefers a life of thought to one of action, and so comes to hate his comrades. The gunman Raven has a hare lip which makes him repellent to most women; his youth has been blighted by a hating parent and the hell of a reformatory school. Pinky is a slum child who has struggled into a slightly higher stratum of the underworld and feels inferior in the presence of his sexually mature friends. The clerk, Conrad Drover, in *It's A Battlefield,* is haunted by envy of his physically superior brother. Myatt, the currant merchant, is hypersensitive about his Jewish race. Among the minor characters there is an even more marked eccentricity, which leads them often into becoming types rather than characters. Greene himself, in a revelatory passage of *Journey without Maps,* says of one of the people he meets,

> "Already he was intent on joining that odd assortment of 'characters' (the Grants and the Kilvanes) one collects through life, vivid grotesques, people so simple that they always have the same side turned to one, doomed by their unself-consciousness to be material for the novelist, to supply the minor characters, to be endlessly caricatured, to make in their multiplicity one's world."

By this strange half-world of odd people, the guerilla fighters against the uniform society, Greene is fascinated, and he has pictured it in many passages. Its characteristic quality he describes as *seediness.*

> "There seemed to be a seediness about the place you couldn't get to the same extent elsewhere, and seediness has a very deep appeal: even the seediness of civilisation, of the sky-signs in Leicester Square, the 'tarts' in Bond Street, the smell of cooking greens off Tottenham Court Road, the little tight-waisted Jews in the Strand. It seems to satisfy, temporarily, the sense of nostalgia for something lost; it seems to represent a stage further back . . .
>
> "It is nearer the beginning; like Monrovia it has begun to build wrong, but at least it has only begun; it hasn't gone so far away as the smart, the new, the chic, the cerebral."

Greene's situations frequently hinge round issues of personal loyalty and betrayal, and, generally speaking, the "seedy" are the

more deep in their loyalties. Minty, the exiled religious maniac treasuring the memories of his friends, Rose accepting damnation in her love for a murderer, the criminals sharing his cell who refuse to betray the priest, are people whose loyalty is more strong than all the artificial bonds of nations or states. These people have their betrayals also—Conrad Drover sleeps with his condemned brother's wife, Anne gives Raven away to her detective fiancé—but somehow they expiate their failings in a way the slick and the successful never do.

Always, the inward responsibility of the individual to other individuals is shown to be more valuable than blind loyalty to an institution. The priest and the police lieutenant in *The Power and The Glory* have each a loyalty, but the loyalty of the priest is to the salvation of individual men and women, while the lieutenant's is to an abstract plan of happiness, no matter how many lives are lost in its achievement. The barren nature of collective loyalty is shown mordantly in the soliloquy of the Police Commissioner in *It's a Battlefield.*

> "By the time he reached the courtyard, he had decided that he did not care for politics. In Northumberland Avenue he said to himself that justice was not his business . . . I've got nothing to do with justice, he thought, my job is simply to get the right man, and the cold washed air did not prevent his thoughts going back to damp paths steaming in the heat under leaves like hairy hands. One pursued by this path and that, and only as a last resort, when there was no other means of ensuring a murderer's punishment, did one burn his village. Justice had nothing to do with the matter. One left justice to magistrates, to judges and juries, to members of parliament, to the Home Secretary."

By such sophistries the Commissioner tries to salve his uneasy conscience.

Mather, the detective in *A Gun for Sale,* immerses himself in a collective activity.

> "All over London there were other cars doing the same: he was part of an organisation. He did not want to be a leader, he did not even wish to give himself up to some God-sent fanatic of a leader, he liked to feel that he was one of thousands more or less equal working for a concrete end: not equality of opportunity, not government by the people or by the richest or by the best: but simply to do away with crime which meant uncertainty."

For all the sense of duty, the loyalty to organisations, the Commissioner supports a civilisation that makes the prison and the factory equally the graves of human individuality, Mather becomes the unwitting tool of really big criminals in their efforts to escape the revenge of the petty villain Raven, and the police lieutenant slaughters peasants to save them from believing what they wish.

Yet, although one feels always on the side of the warped and pitiful men and women whom Greene pits against the great and evil forces of society, they are by no means attractive figures. And, what is more germane to our point, they are not always satisfactory as characters in a novel. Greene has a preoccupation with the pathetic and the sordid, so that for almost all his characters life has no real material or even spiritual end, and what happens to them rarely gives real beauty or happiness. Apart from the priest, few leave any great

or good works behind them. The quiet anti-climax of each life strips the promise of a future.

Of the way in which Greene distorts his characters, his portrayal of their sexual lives is typical. The statements of some critics that Greene always regards sex with disgust are exaggerated and unjust. The loves of some of his characters are ugly—the affair between Minnie and Conrad Drover, the attitude of Pinky towards Rose, the seductions of Mr. Surrogate. But for the most part the sexual adventures are dull and perfunctory rather than disgusting in an active way, and sex clearly plays so small a part in Greene's scheme beside the moral and spiritual wars in which his characters are engaged that he appears to think it requires little attention, except where—as in *Brighton Rock*—it has some important bearing on the moral conflict. The incestuous love of Anthony and Kate Farrant in *England Made Me,* perhaps because it is as perverse as the characters themselves, perhaps because it is doomed never to be fulfilled, is the only sexual episode that plays a really dominant part in one of Greene's books, and attains a remarkable beauty in the almost Elizabethan tragedy of these two linked souls.

It is perhaps in this frustrated incompleteness of his characters that we see the weakening duality of Greene's outlook. As a Catholic he has certain preconceptions of right and wrong action, of what is and what is not a mortal sin. Yet, as a man of great sympathy with the unfortunate, as a man in that strange position where his reason leans towards traditionalism while his emotions turn towards revolution, Greene is inevitably frustrated in his outlook, and transmits his frustration to his characters.

All his books show, vigorously and indignantly, the way in which society warps the natures of men and women and turns them to bitterness and evil. Theoretically, Greene may recognise original sin, but in his writing the evil in man is always less than the evil without, arising from the collective activities of society. His observations of humanity force him into a revolutionary attitude, and in *The Lawless Roads* he admits his feeling of the need for a dynamic activity that will sweep away the social abuses and inequality that are destroying or injuring the lives of ordinary men and women.

He then practices a curious piece of self-deception by assuming that the real leaders of the Roman Catholic church are revolutionary in outlook, that the "revolutionary" Papal Encyclicals are conceived in all sincerity, and that it is the obstruction of bishops and more-or-less corrupt lower clergy that has prevented the Roman church as a whole from becoming a revolutionary force. This attitude, of course, ignores the way in which the Papacy has, in the recent as well as the distant past, intrigued against freedom and revolution. It ignores the papal agreements with Mussolini, the blessings on the Italian invasions of Ethiopia and Spain, the flirtations with reactionary American capitalism.

The Catholic revolutionary of the type of Eric Gill or Greene always becomes insignificant in his effect because of his reluctance to accept that, whatever the merits of Christian dogmas, the Catholic church as an institution is certainly inspired by no humanist idealism.

In judging Greene as a novelist, we might not at first seem justified in criticising his ideas. Yet when, as is quite clear, his ideas create a perceptible hindrance to the full expression of his literary talents, that criticism becomes necessary.

The Power and The Glory is the best of Greene's novels because he appears there to be approaching, almost somnambulistically, a solution to his problem. The priest is concerned with his holy mission, to maintain the teachings of the church in his province in Mexico. Theoretically the struggle is between two collectivities, the Church and the State, represented by the priest and the police lieutenant. But in fact, while the police lieutenant remains the representative of a collective idea, the servant of the state, the presence of the church becomes steadily more distant and shadowy, and the priest seems to stand out ever more solidly as an individual, without tangible connections or allegiances, fighting a guerilla war for an idea which he considers right. Instead of being the representative of Catholicism, he becomes more and more the type of the human person fighting against the unifying urges of a power society, and triumphing even in defeat and destruction, because in this battle there are no fronts and the messages are passed on by example to other individuals who continue as rebellious elements in the total state. This is an underground which is never eliminated, because it has no central committee and no headquarters, except in the heart of each man who feels the need for freedom.

There are perhaps many and wide differences between Greene and Eric Gill in their approach to the superficial details of life, but they have in common their adherence to the Roman church and their belief in the uniqueness of each human being and his absolute right to freedom. Both detect the fraud of politics, and seek some other way of revolutionary change—a change from within that will allow man to realise his uniqueness. Gill was forced steadily in a direction where finally his statements were in direct contradiction to the organisational practice of the Roman Church. Just before his death, he wrote, in a letter to the anarchist, Herbert Read,

> ". . . in spite of the appearance to the contrary I am really in complete agreement with you about the necessity of anarchism, the ultimate truth of it, and its immediate practicality as syndicalism."

I am not suggesting that Greene will actually declare himself as Gill did, or that he will take part in any social movement. He may merely continue to work as a novelist, transmitting through the medium of his writing the inner conflict between the authoritarian doctrine of Catholicism and the idea of personal freedom which is implicit in the true teachings of Christianity. All we can say is that, up to the present, Greene has steadily developed the theme of the individual person pitted against society, and that his novels have come more and more to illustrate the real nature of this conflict in which we are all involved.

But he realises, as we all do, that it is not a struggle to be won with ease. There are forces within as well as without us that we must fight, and not least of these is our own deeply rooted fear of

freedom, the childish clinging to our bonds. Before we can change society around us, we must change the nature of our own hearts, and it may be a realisation of this that has kept Greene from committing himself in anything more than the vaguest terms to the discussion of how we shall change society. He perceives within himself "a distrust of any future based on what we are," and the observer of society whose ideas arise from anything deeper than the repetition of political abstractions, will share that distrust. The re-creation of the man within is a prerequisitite of the alteration of society into any pattern that ensures an end of present social evils. And perhaps it is by a cultivation of the personal qualities of men, of their intimate loyalties to each other, of all those unorganised personal contacts that spring up outside any rigid organisation, that we shall proceed the more rapidly towards freedom.

Yet we cannot reach our freedom alone. Greene's priest says,

> "I don't know a thing about the mercy of God: I don't know how awful the human heart looks to him. But I do know this—that if there's ever been a single man in this state damned then I'll be damned too. I wouldn't want it to be any different. I just want justice, that's all."

In the same way, while one man about us is a slave, we are not free. Yet this is an individual, not a collective responsibility, a responsibility we cannot relegate to some state or party for its fulfilment.

Men, compound of good and evil, can still attain grace, and no man need be damned, no man need give up the hope of freedom. Here there is no revolutionary heroism, no political rhetoric calling us to iconoclastic action, yet we feel that in his own way Green may be a more genuine revolutionary than many who have been more vociferous in their demands for freedom. For a realisation of the nature of man, towards which Greene has striven, is certainly necessary before he can be made free.

Poetry

Four Poems — *Harry Roskolenko*

ODD CONFIGURATIONS.

Ribs, thighs, skulls of eyeless eyes,
Nothing of the brains, the sex, the heart;
This soldier, his left shoe growing grass,
The right missing—and the other parts
Unknown, dissolved, distributed
To ground, tree, sky, anonymity.
The spurious essence of soul debates
The body's sacred, personal members.

An oration! Was he an orator?
A workingman! But his hands are missing . . .
Or between these trades, his recent job
Left fractured in the fog.

Buna, New Guinea.

THE MASK OF THE HEART.

Silence is a gap, dividing nature from the heart,
Dividing the bee from its oversweet honey,
Taking the running rivers never to the running sea,
The land without Spring or snow or season of rain.
It is the open mouth, saying to the furious air
That the world has closed us into its city of sadness.
It has made the valleys into mountains, from mountains mere hills;
The place of the heart is amid hawks and roofless towers.
The classical emblem is the pale, sick, fugitive face,
Combed in the agate eyes as a mummer of misery.
But if the body is stout, the bones broad, the muscles big,
How does the mask wear its outer sympathy.

DEAD JAP SOLDIER.

The face in its oval bloated size
Has lost editorial and interior surprise;
The grubby legs, his girth, his manners,
Lie floating on coral jagged banners.
His name, ancestry, and age is vague;
No Lord was he. No samurai escapade
Adorned his untouched belly, slashed his heart,
The usual bullet was less sacred art.
No Poetry or diary was in his pack,
Nor geisha photograph for some other lack;
Only the bloated belly, twice its size
Glazed in the philosophy of his eyes.

Biak, Schuten Islands.

THE WORD, *LITTLE.*

If the heart is small, if the brain is interchangeable,
The figure of the whole is tiny in its dominion,
The soul petty in its stone dwellings,
And what is noble is the opposite of little;
And what is large sinks into the heart
When what is least becomes the active part.
If the brain is tall, and the heart is interchangeable,
The rigour of the soul is huge in its opinion,
The world is big in its forest and its fields,
And what is humble is the reverse of arrogance:
And what is small runs to its indifference
And what is most lives its inner part.

Lyell's Hypothesis Again

—*Kenneth Rexroth*

I

The mountain road ends here
Broken away in the chasm where
The bridge washed out years ago.
The first scarlet larkspur glitters
In the first patch of April
Morning sunlight. The engorged creek
Roars and rustles like a military
Ball. Here by the waterfall,
Insuperable life, flushed
With the equinox, sentient
And sentimental, falls away
To the sea and death. The tissue
Of sympathy and agony
That binds the flesh in its Nessus' shirt;
The clotted cobweb of unself
And self; sheds itself and flecks
The sun's bed with darts of blossom
Like flagellant blood above
The water bursting in the vibrant
Air. This ego, bound by personal
Tragedy and the vast
Impersonal vindictiveness
Of the ruined and ruining world,
Pauses in this immortality,
As passionate, as apathetic,
As the lava flow that burned here once;
And stopped here; and said, "This far
And no further." and spoke thereafter
In the simple diction of stone.

II

Naked in the warm April air,
We lie under the redwoods,
In the sunny lee of a cliff.
As you kneel above me I see
Tiny red marks on your flanks
Like bites, where the redwood cones
Have pressed into your flesh.
You can find just the same marks
In the lignite in the cliff
Over our heads. *Sequoia*
Langsdorfii before the ice,
And *sempivirens* afterwards,

There is little difference,
Except for all those years.
Here in the sweet, moribund
Fetor of spring flowers, washed,
Flotsam and jetsam together,
Cool and naked together,
Under this tree for a moment,
We have escaped the bitterness
Of love, and love lost, and love
Betrayed. And what might have been,
And what might be, fall equally
Away with what is, and leave
Only these ideograms
Printed on the immortal
Hydrocarbons of flesh and stone.

(*Lyell's hypothesis—that the processes of earth change now observable are sufficient to account for the "record of the rocks."*)

On the Far Steppes of Asia
—Wrey Gardiner

On the far steppes of Asia and the islands there are statues
Of the god of mercy sexless and divine
Whose smile is lost in the impenetrable odour
Of Byzantine empires, crumbling and alone.
Over all the world the broken smile of the neglected statues
Looks out over the barren fields of the little men
Who do not know that mercy can be strained
And all their empty boasts like foam disperse.
So art still lingers in the mannerisms of the past
And we are arrested by the perfection of a smile
On the lips of a cold statue from the east of time
Lost in the dream of yesterday's denial.

The March—Peter Wells

Across the hill the soldiers march in a forlorn column
Their feet encrusted with pearls; the armourer's weapon
Marks a solitary bird flying on the horizon.
Across the hill the leaf seeks its advance to death
The root ceasing to dive comes up and strangles the leaf
The soldiers sing and the guns rattle in their breath.
Across the hill the tired animal seeks its prey
The dust and foam pant backward from the shore of day,
The wounded men wandering watch the eclipsed sky.

Two Poems—William Everson

1. THE REVOLUTIONIST.

His enemies learned.
In the small of the nights,
In the pre-dawn chill of the swart streets,
What once they despised
He taught them to dream.
The smouldering eye in the iron face
Marked many a man.
He wore the Zealot's heart,
And such was his gift
Power poured to his use.
But his enemies learned.
At cost, with error,
They bled, but they learned.
Learned late, but learned well;
Learned, indeed, only at last,
But learned in time;
And they too mustered;
They too mastered the means of the small hours,
His stratagems, his known deceits.
He made over the roofs,
Half-naked and injured;
Skulked by day in the hedges,
The intrepid face glaring out from the stones with a beast's bale;
Travelled by night the desolate lanes;
Crossed with the moon the hostile border;
Wandered for weeks;
Found far haven.
For a time he aspired.
Men remembered his terrible face
And plotted his triumph.
They were hunted down;
Under that fierce remorseless bane
His cause withered.
He grew old in time,
Subsisting on scraps in a bleak room,
Hating around him the foreign tongues, the foreign faces.
Fixed in his thwartion,
Like some banished lord,
Like Bonaparte, sick for his sovereignty,
The wind of whose want
Poured out of the waste of the South Atlantic
Toward France and fulfilment,
He fastened the past within his grinding heart,
And eked out his life on its gall.

2. THE OUTLAW.

I call to mind that violent man who waded the North.
He imagined a slight;
Killed for it;
Made outlaw, lay in the echoing waste;
Fled to far cities;
Knew dangerous about him the subtle strands of communication
Ticking his doom.
Cornered at last he knelt in the night
And drew like magnet the metal loosed in the acrid air.
And so went down.
Nor ever knew that what brought him such bounty
Was only the wearing out of a way—
He and the wolves and the dazed tribes
Numb in their dissolution.
Blind in their past,
The past betrayed them;
The trees of tradition
Screened from their sight
The enormous forest of the waiting world—
As we, we also,
Bound in our patterns,
Sense but see not
The vestigial usages grooving our lives.
Like some latter-day outlaw
We crouch in our rooms,
Facing the door and the massed future,
And draw doom down on our heads.

Four Paintings by Jankel Adler

To make himself free is a duty for the artist, and the measure of his success is in some degree dependent on how far he can fulfil this primary need. He must be free in particular from ideologies and dogmas, free to practice that scepticism of things imposed which alone can bring a creative faith. He must be free to enter the unveiled mind, to peer into the sectioned skull, to see the world stripped to its bones, and then make from what he has seen a symbol, a revelation to schizoid and imprisoned man.

Going through the recent exhibitions in London, I have felt that there were very few to whom this freedom remained. Even painters like Matisse, Braque and Picasso seemed to have *lost* their freedom, to have become enmeshed in abstractions, in the dogmas of their own technique, to have abandoned the gift of concretely revealing a newly perceived reality. There was something rather terrifying in these monumental canvases, monumental in a double sense because they seemed to commemorate visions in the past rather than to depict

immediate visions. To pass them was like walking through a dead but preserved city, like looking into eyes dimmed by cataract.

Among the artists whose works have been exhibited recently in London there are, however, two at least among the living who stand apart as free men. One is Rouault. The other is Jankel Adler, from whose recent exhibition at the Lefevre Gallery NOW is reproducing four paintings.

Adler destroys the world about him. But his destruction is a revelation. He is like a surgeon whose scalpel cuts away the diseased tissue and bares the bone, like a lapidary breaking down the pebble and revealing the precious stone. More than this, he is a destroyer who builds up. Tearing apart a world of false relations, he reduces it to the elements of thought and vision, to the fundamental images and shapes, and then rebuilds it into his own truth. Like Proudhon, he has for the motto of his art, "Destruo et aedificabo".

In his paintings we see form reaching its true relations through the hand of a man who is free within, a painter whose technique is boldly experimental (carrying into the work of his brush and knife a three-dimensional element that suggests the building up and cutting away of sculptured relief and adds the virtues of its varying planes of light to the resources of colour and surface form), a thinker who has broken away from the false unities of class and country and creed into the real and human unity that lives within us all.

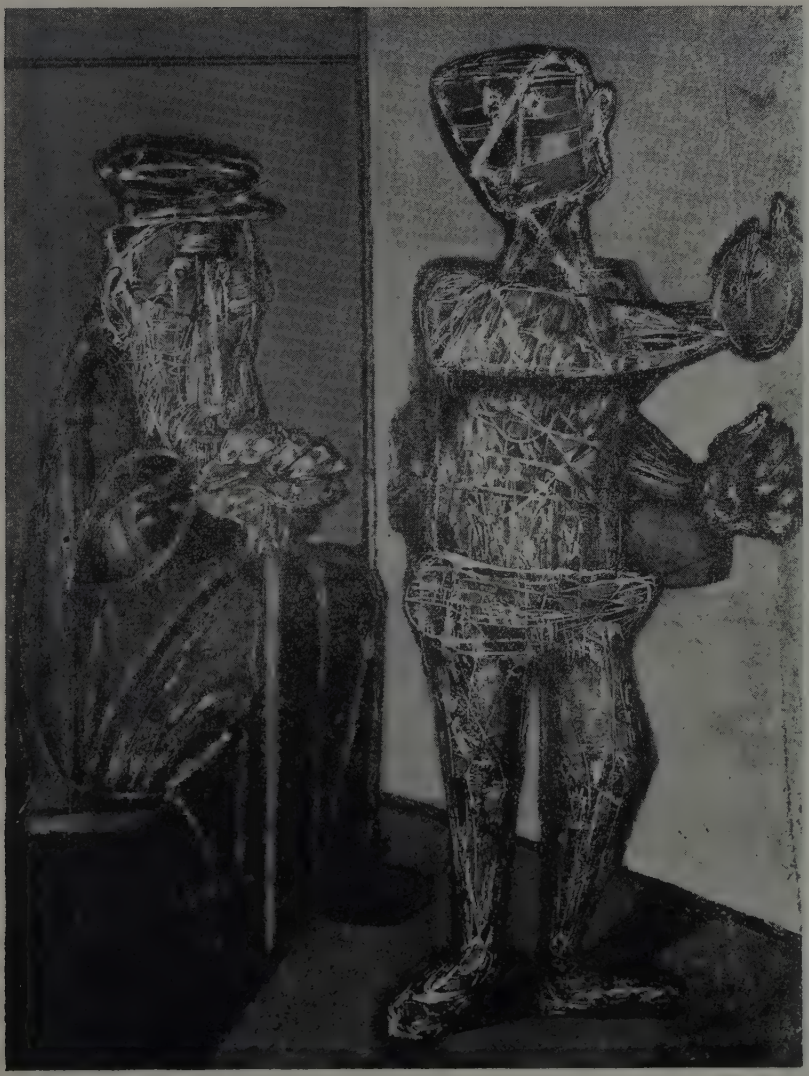
It is from works like those of Adler, from such constructions of vision and imagination, whose forms live with an organic strength and whose colours stir in the mind like music, that we can see how great a thing is the freedom of the spirit. Like the poems of Lorca, they lead us into a land of realities where the gramophone voices of politics are silent and man is whole again.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

Sonnet to Jankel Adler

—*George Barker*

There was this Jew making love to a chair.
What did it do? O Atavar of Love,
It turned back first of all into a tree,
Then to the seed, then to the hand that planted.
He ran his brush down the back and laid bare
The atomic streptococci of the objective;
He handled a wooden leg and physiology
Gave up her secrets. This is most what he wanted.
Eavesdropper on the gossipings of objects,
How do you never frighten them? They stay
Exchanging their secrets, like birds, in your presence.
You, overhearing, graphologise their subjects.
Yes, I know all this. But why do things obey
Your mesmerism? It is because you are absence.



TWO MEN

GIRL WITH CAT

TO MY BROTHER EMILUS

Camillo Berneri

Nietzsche as Anti-Nietzsche

(*Camillo Berneri was an Italian student of philosophy and psychology who became one of the leading theoreticians of the Italian anarchist movement. He taught in Italy until, under the Fascist regime, he refused to take the oath of allegiance, and emigrated to France. There and in Belgium he lived a hard and persecuted life, imprisoned for long periods, subjected to continual police supervision, attacked by the pro-Fascist press, and forced to earn his living by unremunerative toil. In spite of these hardships, he continued his researches and produced a number of important philosophical and psychological essays, of which this study of Nietzsche, first published in the New York journal,* L'Adunata dei Refratteri, *is one.*

When the Spanish civil war began, Camillo Berneri went immediately to work among his fellow anarchists in the building of a revolutionary society. For a time he was with the anarchist columns at the front line. Then he worked on the anarchist periodical in Barcelona, Guerra di Classe. He saw clearly how the trend towards authoritarianism in Republican Spain was submerging the real revolution towards freedom. He spoke his warnings without hesitation, and for this reason was hated and feared by the leaders of the reaction. They took their opportunity, after the fighting in 1937 *between the Anarchists and Communists in Barcelona, to rid themselves of so disconcerting a critic, and on May 7th Berneri and his friend Barbieri were taken from the house in which they were living and murdered by Communist agents. Berneri lived and died for the liberation of humanity from the slavery of the mind as well as from physical bondage. The translation of this essay is by his daughter, M. L. Berneri.* —ED.).

★

That Nietzsche was essentially a poet, and only a mediocre philosopher, is shown by the fact that he did not understand fully that his philosophy of the superman was merely the systematic *compensation* of a sick man obsessed by health and a feminine character obsessed by virility.

But, although he did not grasp the intimate mechanism of his own philosophy, he nevertheless realised intuitively the connection between thought and the physical life of man. All spiritual life is represented by him as the intellectual translation of physical life.

> "Your little reason, which you call *Spirit*, is merely an instrument of your body, O my brother, a small instrument, a small toy of your great reason . . . The feelings and the spirit are merely instruments and toys: behind them there is also your self. *Your self* searches with the eyes of the feelings; it listens also with the ears of the spirit . . . Behind your feelings and your thoughts, O my brother, there is a powerful master, an unknown sage—he is called *your self*. He lives in your body, he is your body."

According to Nietzsche, to every bodily state there is a corresponding spiritual state, and a philosophy is the indication of a certain state of health. The pessimism of the Buddhist, the asceticism of the

Christian, the morality of compassion, equalitarian socialism, are for him merely the psychic equivalents of physical degeneration.

All the historical interpretations of Nietzsche reveal this intimate *compensation*. Humanity created God because it was suffering and feeble. "It was suffering and impotence that created the other world. The fatigue which with a jump—with a mental jump—wants to reach the infinite, a poor ignorant fatigue which has no longer any will, it is this fatigue which created God and the other world." Christianity sprang from the morality of slaves, who tried to give the quality of strength to their own weakness. It was the religion of the Hebrews who, during their own captivity, transformed the "morality of the masters" into the "morality of the slaves", in order not to feel their inferiority. The equality of souls before God is merely "a pretext for the lowest resentment".

Nietzsche interpreted religions, philosophical systems and ethical trends as the reactions of peoples or individuals to their own character or to objective situations. Such a constant visual angle was merely, as we have said, the projection of an introspective intuition which did not reach the sphere of the ego.

Nietzsche was anti-Christian because morbidly Christian, he was exaltedly Dionysiac, because inclined to pessimism. Nietzsche the philosopher is the *repression* of Nietzsche the man, and his superman is psychologically no other than his anti-ego. His polemical style, his excessive negation, his apodictic affirmation, reveal an internal struggle. Nietzsche writes against himself.

The *negation-affirmation* is typical of Nietzsche's writing. Zarathustra is the "destroyer" who can say *Yes* like a sky without clouds, but who can say *No* like the tempest. He is the "despiser" of all that the Good and the Just admire, the "infidel" who proclaims the "death of God"; his disdain can "violate the graves, move frontiers and throw the old broken tables into the unforeseen abyss"; his sarcasm has thrown to all winds the "rotten big words"; he is a broom that puts to flight the cross-bearing spiders, the hurricane that purifies the foul air of the catacombs.

The Twilight of the Idols has as subtitle *How to Philosophise with a Hammer*. It is a subtitle that fits the whole work of Nietzsche, who always writes in the shadow of the sword. *The Antichrist* is a partisan work, a chivalrous enterprise, a philosophical adventure. There is nothing that reminds one of the methodical doubt of Descartes in this phrenetic dancing of a bear among china. The author gives one always the impression of warring against the dragons, of having beheaded a giant, of having blown a temple into the air, of having strangled ten theologians. This Lamennais of atheism and immoralism is a mystic of negation. The true philosopher is only the scientist of metaphysics. He controls his own thought and does not know where it will end. Nietzsche, on the contrary, is always lyrical and always polemical. For him the freedom of the spirit and the transmutation of all values are the same thing. He makes "a formal declaration of war and victory" on all the old conceptions of truth and

falsehood. and beheads God and Christ with a rather too-youthful impetuosity. The apodictic definitions are those he prefers. Dante is "a hyena who writes poetry in the graves", Michelet is "the enthusiast in shirt sleeves", Zola is "the pleasure of stinking". He is not afraid to proclaim that "what a theologian thinks is true *must* be false: this is almost a criterion of truth". Christian monotheism is only a "hybrid edifice of guttering candles", completely decadent. Christianity is only "the insurrection of everything that crawls against everything that flies" He does not care to prove anything. He defines, and nothing is more theological and sacerdotal than definition. Nietzsche falls inevitably into vulgarity, being systematically one-sided. When he affirms that "the *superior* states, which Christianity has put above humanity, as the most valuable of all, are epileptic forms", when he affirms that the Church has only canonised lunatics or great imposters, he falls into *propaganda.* Simmel was perfectly right when he said that Nietzsche has not grasped the ultimate significance of Christian values.

The philosopher who attacks the cult of truth at all costs, is a man devoured with the most enthusiastic passion for truth. He denounces in the philosopher a continuation of the priest, and he himself is a prophet and an apostle, therefore philosopher plus priest.

The philosopher who upholds such an intransigeant atheism reveals himself deeply religious. Zarathustra says of Christ: "in truth he died too soon"; Christ "was not yet fully mature". If he had lived at the time of Zarathustra, the anti-Christ, he would have been his brother and not his enemy.

Zarathustra-Nietzsche considered himself "the best enemy" of Christ. In *Ecce Homo,* Jesus and Zarathustra clasp hands. The last letter of Nietzsche to Brandes is signed *The Crucified.*

Nietzsche's hostility towards Christianity is determined by the morbid and the feminine within him. When we read in *The Twilight of the Idols, "The Imitation of Christ* is one of those books which I cannot take in my hand without feeling a physiological resistance: it exhales a *perfume* of the eternal feminine for which one needs to be either French or Wagnerian . . .", we read the story of a *compensation.*

These reactions have misled Nietzsche. He has not understood that Christ looks to the one who gives and not to the one who takes. Christian altruism is valued in the spirit of charity and renunciation and not in the social gesture. St. Francis, depriving himself of his patrimony, redeems his soul. The Christian ethic is not a social ethic in the manner of Kant, but an individual ethic in the manner of Nietzsche. He (Nietzsche), deeply Christian, revolted against Christianity as he saw it. In this connection the reading of Georges Simmel (*Schopenhauer et Nietzsche*) is of capital importance. This author, commenting on the sentence of Nietzsche, "There can be no God since if there were one I could not accept not to be God", observed with his habitual insight:

> "Though this may seem to us fantastic and excessive, it reveals, under the form of an extreme personalism, a feeling which, in another form, is not very distant from the Christian conception of the inner life. In

Christianity, in fact, as well as our infinite distance and smallness before God, there is the idea of becoming *equal* to him. The mystic of every age and every religion gives rise to this aspiration: to become one with God, or, more audaciously, to become God. The scholastics talk of *deificatio,* and for Meister Eckhardt man can shed his human form and become God again, as he is by his proper and original nature, or, as Angelus Silesius expressed it:

I must find my ultimate end and my beginning,
I must find God in me and me in God
And become what he is . . .

This same passion was felt by Spinoza and Nietzsche: they could not accept not being God."

Nietzsche was destined to fight what was most intimate and alive in him. His phillipics against the religion of pity derive from his struggle against his own excessive pity. The man who, with bitter energy, ordered us to become as hard as the chisel of the sculptor, as hard as diamond, was tender. He himself takes no pride in lacking pity; on the contrary, he explains that it is due to an "excess" that he has come to fight the religion of pity:

"Unhappy those who love if they have a high character which is above their own pity!—The devil told me one day: 'God too has his hell: it is his love for man'—and lately I heard him say these words: 'God is dead: it is his pity for man which has killed God'."

He was unable for years to talk of the Franco-Prussian war, in which he had taken part as a medical orderly. To a friend who pressed him to relate his military reminiscences, he answered sadly that one must try to forget such memories.

He used to love giving free lessons to poor students, and when David Strauss died he suffered greatly because he persuaded himself that he had been the cause of his death through his ferocious attacks. Tender with his friends, he had great need of tender friendship. In 1884, he wrote to one of the closest companions of his youth:

"My dear old friend, when I read your last letter it seemed that you were pressing my hand with a melancholy look: melancholy, as if you wanted to tell me, 'How it is possible that we have so little in common today, that we live in such different worlds? At one time instead . . . It is thus, dear friend, that you appear to me, in all the colours that are dear to me: everything is finished, past intimacy; we still see one another, we talk in order not to be silent, we still write each other letters, but the truth is the look which announces it—and that tells me (I hear it only too well), Friend Nietzsche, you are all alone'."

Three years later, in 1887, he wrote to his sister:

"How lonely I am today! I have no longer anyone with whom I can laugh—no-one with whom I can drink a cup of tea, no-one who will console me in a friendly way!"

Needing pity, and excessively sensitive, he reacts. And he writes, "Pity is in opposition to the tonic feelings which enhance the energy of vital sentiment; it acts with a depressive effect. When one has pity one loses strength. Pity always increases and multiplies the loss of strength which sorrow on its own account inflicts on life. Sorrow itself, through pity, becomes contagious: in some cases it can bring a total loss of life and of vital energy."

All this, it will be seen, is reduced to the binomial, *health-sickness.* He wants to cure himself of Christianity, of the religion of pity, of the philosophy of Schopenhauer, of the music of Wagner. When he

breaks with the god of Bayreuth, he consoles himself with the music of Bizet, but he then plays for whole nights the music of *Parsifal*. During one of these vigils this confession escapes him—"It is with real horror that I have realised the intimate parenthood which ties me to Wagner."

It is impossible not to speak of the cultural divorces and the broken friendships of Nietzsche, which explain him more than anything else.

He had profoundly the feeling of "respect". Having arrived at the intuition that this feeling falsified his own internal life, obstructing its autonomous development, he rebelled against the "masters", Schopenhauer and Wagner. But it is not merely the revolt of the son who wants to become a "man" against the father; it is also the revolt of the sick man who wants to become healthy.

Schopenhauer is attacked relentlessly, because Nietzsche is defending himself against him. It is in himself that he fights the author who came into his life through the breach of a moment of profound discouragement.

> "After some painful experiences and disillusionments, I felt really lonely, without help, without principles, without hopes and without a single pleasant memory . . . It was in this state of mind that the principal works of Schopenhauer happened to fall into my hands. One can imagine what effect it produced on me!"

Nietzsche had to choose: either the *nirvana* of the saint or the will of the ascetic. Annihilate himself and the world; that is the solution which Schopenhauer offered him, showing him the saint:

> "He now looks calm and smiling upon the phantasms of this world, which once moved and troubled his spirit, but which now stand before him like the figures in chess once the game is ended, or like the masks removed in the morning which scorned and troubled us in a night of carnival. Life and its forms move before him like fluctuating apparitions. like a vague morning dream, which is already dissolved by reality and which can deceive no longer."

In *The Birth of Tragedy* it is obvious that Nietzsche took as his point of departure the metaphysics of Schopenhauer, representing nature as a blind activity without finality, perennially creative but also perennially destructive of its own creations. It becomes conscious of itself in man; it assumes in him the shape of a never-fulfilled aspiration, that is to say, "a will without motive, always suffering, dying, and so successively during centuries, until our planet breaks into fragments". The existence of the world therefore appears to him morally and logically unjustifiable, but he already departs from his master by supposing an aesthetic justification to which corresponds the faculty of creating and enjoying the work of art which he calls the Appolinian faculty.

Man, fusing his own personality with the universal soul, conceiving himself as a small part of the will which lives and suffers in everything, experiences an intoxication, an ecstacy which Nietzsche defines as the Dionysiac state. Through the Dionysiac arts (music, dancing, lyric poetry), man withdraws himself from pessimism, forgetting the universal sorrow. The Greek tragedy is Dionysiac, but it is built on the basis of the emotion born from the consciousness of inevitable

sorrow and death. Once again Nietzsche projects the intuition of his own compensations in psychological interpretation.

When he is the friend of Wagner, the latter is the composer of *Siegfried*. Like Nietzsche, Wagner fights against pessimism with a Dionysiac spirit.

The man who in 1861 had created a musical composition entitled "Sorrow is the fundamental note of nature", who in 1865 had discovered Schopenhauer, began in 1872 to react against Schopenhauerian philosophy and Wagnerian music, but in *Thoughts out of Season* (1873-76) still exalted Schopenhauer as the new Heraclitus and Wagner as the modern Aeschylus. In 1876 Nietzsche parted from those whom he had considered the mentors of his youth. Nietzsche gives the clue to this break—"I was afraid to see *compromised* all that up to then had been my will". Fearing that Wagner kept him enslaved with their community of views, with gratitude, with irreplacable friendship, Nietzsche, shut up in his professor's life, tired and ill, reacted.

> "I understood then that my instinct wanted to reach the contrary of that which Schopenhauer had wanted: the justification of life, even in what it has of the more terrible, the more equivocal, the more false. For this I had at hand the formula *Dionysiac*."

Wagner was a compromise between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The latter escaped from the first, in order to be able to liberate himself from the second. After having proclaimed Wagner the "saviour of Germanic culture", the "great simplifier of the world", Nietzsche attacked him violently in *Ecce Homo* and in *The Case of Wagner* as a typical decadent, a sick man. *Human, all too Human* is a work of liberation from the influx of Wagnerian music and of the philosophy of " the great counterfeiter of Frankfurt".

Nietzsche begins to separate himself from his spiritual mentors at the commencement of his illness. In *Thoughts out of Season* he had told himself, "Your teachers can be nothing else for you than liberators". When he saw that they were becoming his masters, he fled from them and revolted against them. He was to write that Wagner had been one of his sicknesses, and to denounce the music of his friend as itself sick.

> "I therefore establish as an immediate principle that the art of Wagner is a sick art. The problems it brings on the scene (which are merely cases of hysteria), the epileptic character which passion takes in him, his exalted sensibility, his palate which requires ever more violent stimulants, his insatiability which he camouflages into a system, and also to a great extent the choice of his heroes and heroines, the physiological types they represent (a museum of pathological cases): these are so many indications of illness which cannot deceive us. *Wagner est une névrose*."

But this ferocious critic would blame those who applauded him:

> "Yes, I love this man and nobody loves him more than I! He was a man after my heart . . . It is understandable that I would give to no-one the right to appropriate to himself my judgment on Wagner! None of those infamous rascals who pullulate like lice on society today has the right to pronounce either in praise or criticism a name as great as that of Richard Wagner."

In another book he proclaims him his "greatest benefactor", and in the magnificent aphorism entitled *Starry Friendship* he writes,

alluding to his detachment from Wagner:

"Starry Friendship! We were friends and now we are separated: we are two ships, each having its assignment and its definite route. It might happen that we meet and celebrate a feast together, as we used to do,—and in that instant the good ships were so calmly in the same harbour, under the same ray of sun, that it seemed they had already reached their destination and had always had in view the same destination. But then the omnipotent necessity of the task assigned to each one pushed us again very far from one another, towards different climates; and perhaps we shall never see one another again,—or perhaps, yes, we see one another again, but without recognition, because the sea and the sun will have changed us so much! It was destiny that we should become strangers to one another; the supreme law which governs us wanted it; it is for this reason that we must respect one another even more than before, in order to sanctify with our memory our ancient friendship. There is probably an immense sidereal curve and orbit in which our way and our destiny are transported like corpuscles. Let us arouse ourselves to that idea!—since our life is too short, and the power of our sight too infinitesimal to be more than friends: friends in the sense of this sublime possibility! And we want to 'believe' in this way in our starry friendship, even if we must be enemies on this earth."

Did not Zarathustra say: "In one's friend one must see one's best enemy". Wagner was his *best enemy*.

We can now undertake the interpretation of Nietzschean immoralism, which is an Appolinian-Dionysiac immoralism. It is as a poet that Nietzsche asserts himself against pessimism and it is lyrically that he is immoralist. These quotations from *The Twilight of the Idols* appear to me particularly significant:

"In order that there should be art, that there should be action or any aesthetic contemplation, there must be a preliminary and indispensible psychological condition: an intoxication. It is necessary that the intoxication should first elevate the irritability of the whole machine: otherwise art is impossible . . . The essential in intoxication is the feeling of increased strength and fulness. Out of this feeling we impart to things, we constrain them to accept something from us, we force them by violence;—this proceeding is called *idealisation*. Let us get rid of a prejudice: idealisation does not consist, as is generally believed, in a deduction, in a subtraction of what is small and accessory. What is decisive in it is on the contrary a *formidable* erosion of the principal traits, in such a way that all the other traits disappear . . ."

"We must be rich in opposition. It is only at this price that we are made *fruitful*; we remain young only on the condition that the soul does not rest, that the soul does not ask for peace. Nothing has become more foreign to us than that which at one time was the object of desires, the 'peace of the soul' for which the *Christians* yearn; nothing is less the object of our envy than the moral herd, and the fat happiness of the calm conscience. One renounces the *great* life when one renounces war . . ."

All the immoralism of Nietzsche has the *pathos* of Rousseau, the fascinating audacity of the genial paradox of Schopenhauer and that splendid *bilis* which lightens and thunders and bursts, but the apodictic aphorisms of his *Beyond Good and Evil* reveal the poverty of his philosophy.

"Anything good is instinct and therefore easy, necessary and free." The criterion of judgment is "the voice of the healthy body". "Man must go back to naure, to the original text, *homo natura*. Morality and religion belong to the psychology of error."

Schiller and Byron anticipated Nietzsche, who has only been

partly understood in his exaltation of the *furious beast*. He admired force of character even if it became great in evil. Dante admired Capaneo, Milton admired Satan, Nietzsche goes further: he sees, in the furious beast, the natural man. He thus advises his sister:

> "You must read Shakespeare: you will find there characters strong, brutal, powerful, real men of granite. In these our time is so poor!"

Cesare Borgia is "the man of prey", but he is also the *type* of the *condottiere*. For Nietzsche, this is enough.

> "What ingenuousness to say, 'Man must be this or that!' Reality reveals to us enchanting wealth of types . . . and an ignorant moralist labourer will come to tell us, 'No, man must be different!' He claims to know what man must be—this parasite and bigot; he paints himself on the wall and says 'Ecce Homo!' . . . The individual in his antecedents and consequences is part of destiny . . . To tell him 'Change Yourself' is to ask for the change of all things."

August Strindberg wrote to Nietzsche:

> "Yet it seems to me that with all your frankness you have adulated a little too much the criminal type. Observe the hundreds of photographs which illustrate the criminal man of Lombroso, and you will agree that the criminal is a base animal, a degenerate, a weakling, who does not possess the necessary ability to avoid the paragraphs of the law which oppose strong obstacles to his will and his strength."

And Nietzsche replied:

> "The hereditary criminal is decadent, even idiotic—there is no doubt! But the history of common criminals from whose records the English Galton has gathered the most abundant material brings one always to a man too strong for a certain social level. The last great criminal case in Paris, the Prado case, has given a classical type. In self-control, spirit and sureness, Prado was superior to his judges and also to his lawyers."

This explanation would suffice to demonstrate that Max Nordau (see *Degenerations*) has understood very slightly the immoralism of Nietzsche. Certain exaggerations of Nietzsche are understandable and can therefore be assessed only if one keeps in mind that they are the fruit of his demands.

The Nietzsche of *Beyond Good and Evil* and of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* is the Nietzsche who, as a youth, decided with a companion to write poems in an ironical and vigorous style, imitating the *brutalism* of Byron. And it is the same Nietzsche who, on the 31st December, 1888, being on the edge of madness, wrote to Strindberg:

> "Dear Sir,—The answer to your story you will hear shortly: it will be the shot of a gun. I have called in Rome a convention of princes. I want to have men shot . . .
>
> "Au revoir! Because we shall see one another again.
>
> "*One single condition: we must divorce.*
>
> "Nietzsche-Caesar."

Syphilitic from 1870, suffering from migraine, nausea, gastritis and eye disorders, the healthy *furious beast* and Dionysiac were for him an obsessive mirage. He who exalted adventure, dangerous living, great enterprises, was a professor tied to his job. In his copy of *Morality without Sanction or Obligation* by Guyau, he underlined thickly the following passage:

> "Let us suppose for example an artist who feels in himself genius and who all his life has been condemned to manual labour; that feeling of wasted existence, of an unfulfilled task, of an unrealised ideal will persecute him, obsess his sensibility, almost in the same way as if conscious

of moral weakness."

He added in the margin:

"This was my existence at Basle."

Besides, we must take into account the infatuation of a writer so easily influenced by favourite writers. His sister tells us:

"Since he had learned to know and admire Schopenhauer, he talked about women in such a terrible way that I often had to express my astonishment."

Nietzsche's explanation of the origin of morality in biological and social evolution comes from Spencer. His attribution of all our feelings to egoism characterised the work of Paul Rée, his friend—*Observations psychologiques* (1875) and *Sur l'origine des sentiments moraux* (1877). Many of his phrases against democracy and the plebians are merely a regurgitation of Teognide, to whom he had dedicated an essay in Latin in 1864, when he was at the school of Pforzheim. The exaltation of caste was in him a reflection of aristocatic pride. In a note in 1881 he wrote:

"I have been taught to make the origin of my blood and my name go back to an old noble family of Poland, the Nietzky . . . I will not deny that I was as a child extremely proud of this Polish origin. Besides, that my external appearance still presents a Polish type has often been confirmed to me."

His admiration of Napoleon was inculcated in him from childhood by his grandmother and mother. As a child Nietzsche reproduced one of his grandmother's stories about Napoleon in brilliant verses.

A poet—we must interpret him as such! Henry Lichtenberger suggested—

"Those who want to understand and appreciate the work of Nietzsche should, I think, consider it at first not from the point of view of its general value, scientific or social, but more simply as a confession, as a kind of intimate journal."

We must keep this advice in mind in order to understand what profound moralism is hidden—to those who look at it superficially—in the virulent immoralism of Nietzsche.

We have already noted that he professed the cult of the ancestors. His sister defined the nature of this aristocratic pride.

"He used to maintain that every virtue of the soul and every strength of the body is acquired only through generations by means of great patience and constancy in small things. With self-control and knowing how to be content and adapt oneself constantly to the same tasks."

The boy who used to compose mazurkas, dedicating them to his ancestors, is the boy who burnt his hand to demonstrate to his college companions that the act of Mucius Scaevola was possible. The aristocratic doctrine of Nietzsche is based not on the accident of external position (wealth, pleasures, honours), but on the consciousness of "feeling worthy". The right to the aristocratic position derives from the substantial qualities of the person, and corresponds to an objective justice. The rights which derive from the position put no obligation on the dominator of men and things towards others, but towards himself: he is obliged to form and maintain his own being worthy of the right to power. The worthy man acts in a worthy manner and is not to be judged on his visible results, but on the greatness of his will.

The value of a "great man" is not to be measured by the results of his actions, but by his "other-being", by his aloofness from others.

The ideal of Nietzsche was that of Goethe:

> "Lose the habit of incomplete things: live and will actively perfection and beauty."

For him, as for Schiller, superior natures count for what they are, and the vulgar ones for what they do.

Far from eudemonism (which asks: "What does the world give to me?") and far from moralism (which asks "What do I give to the world?"), Nietzsche sets the problem of being. "Egoism wants to have something, personalism wants to be something" (Simmel). Nietzsche bases his own ethic on personalism. The superman's will to dominate is also the will to be superior. The life of the superman will be more intense and more complete, but, if he enjoys more, he will also suffer more. He will create new values beyond moral laws and truths. Happiness and suffering, good and evil passions, illusion and truth, all these are one in the superman, who is a functional ideal and not a determined type. The superman will go towards his aim, dancing and laughing with the happy spontaneity of a child. He will be "Creator, sculptor, hardness of the hammer, happiness of the seventh day".

The man who distinguishes does not ask "what it costs". He knows that suffering produces all the greatness of humanity and he aspires not to happiness but to the accomplishment of his own works. Visions of "well being" are for Nietzsche visions of "haberdashers, of Christians, beasts and women, Englishmen and other democrats". The love of one's neighbour is a travesty of egoism; superior is "the love for those far off and those to come". The exaltation of the caste is exaltation of the élite.

> "One day the workers must live like the bourgeois today, but above them there will be a superior caste which will distinguish itself by the absence of needs; it will therefore be poor, simpler, but it will possess power."

No doubt is possible: Nietzsche is a moralist. He who is not convinced of this is a superficial person who has not understood that the amoralism of Nietzsche is only a negation which is in reality a superlative. In order to understand the morality of Nietzsche we must go beyond his immoralism, which is only the verbose and aggressive robe of a thought directed towards ethics. Giuseppe Rensi (*Le antinomie dello spirito*) observed:

> "Nietzsche in the last analysis succeeds in passing for an amoralist merely through playing on words.— And the play on words reduced to its essential scheme is the following: first, Nietzsche puts himself at the point of view of the majority, of the vulgar masses, of the herd, as he called them, and he asks himself what is morality; the answer is that (from this point of view) morality is all those petty cautious and small thoughts of tranquillity which Nietzsche calls 'the virtue of sleep'. Then Nietzsche puts himself at the point of view of the superior man, of the hero, and he reasons thus—What is morality? We have seen it. Morality is, by definition of the masses, that complex of fears and meticulousness which constitute 'the virtue of sleep'. Therefore I do not recognise morality. I reject and despise it; I am therefore amoralist."

Nietzsche did not try to pass as amoralist, but defines himself an immoralist; and that is what he was. The true immoralist is only a

transmuter of moral values. The proof is in the fact that the immoralist does not smile in front of moral dogmatism, but fights ferociously against it. We must here recall the acute parallel traced by Palante.

> "When Stirner launches his anathemas against the sacerdotal spirit, he has himself the gestures of the exorcist. He hates so much the spirit, the idea, and other ethical entities that he needs to believe in their reality in order to attack them with all his anger. Bayel believes so little in the power of morality that it does not even occur to him to irritate himself against it. To attack it would seem to him like charging an open door. Stirner and Nietzsche, when they attack morality, give the impression that they are lifting mountains, that they are sustaining the struggle of Jacob with the Angel, and also sometimes that they are fighting like Don Quixote against windmills."

Nietzsche, atheist and religious, anti-Christian and ultra-Christian, ferocious sentimentalist, immoralist and moralist, is an author who should be understood through the examination of his personality rather than in the letter of his writings. Not only the superficial critics, but also his fanatical parrots have failed to understand Nietzsche.

We must not ask from Nietzsche the coherence of the philosopher; he must be considered as a meditative artist with a powerful and original personality. Many unjust criticisms and many naive exaltations would be avoided if he were valued for what he was—the negation-affirmation of his deeper ego.

Paul Goodman

Revolution, Sociolatry and War

I. A MISCALCULATION IN THE MARXIAN DYNAMICS OF REVOLUTION

According to Marx and Engels, the dynamism of the people's revolution into socialism rises from the interaction of two psychological attitudes: (*a*) the spiritual alienation of the proletariat, because of extreme division of labour and capitalist productive relations, from man's original concern with production and from natural social co-operation; (*b*) the brute reaction to intolerable deprivation brought on by the falling rate of profit and the capitalist crises. To expand these points somewhat:

(*a*) To Marx and Engels the specific properties of humanity are the ability to produce things and to give mutual aid in production. But the sub-division of labour and the capitalist use of machine technology de-humanize production: a man makes only a part of a commodity sold on a distant market, and performing an automatic opera-

tion he employs only a modicum of his powers. Further, the conditions of bourgeois competition and wage slavery isolate men from each other and destroy mutuality, family-life, comradeship. There is nothing in the capitalist institutions to engage the deep interest or keep the loyalty of the proletariat. They are made into fractional people and these fractions of men are indifferent to the bourgeois mores and society.

(*b*) On the other hand they are not indifferent to starvation, disease, sexual deprivation, infant mortality, and death in war; but these are the results of the wage-cuts, imperialism, unemployment, and fluctuation inherent in the bourgeois need to counteract the falling rate of profit and to re-invest. At the level of resentment at frustration and animal reaction to pain, there is concern for a violent change, there is latent rebelling.

From these attitudes, the revolutionary idea emerges somewhat as follows: driven by need to consult their safety, and with understanding given by teachers who explain the causes of their hurt, and with their original human aspirations recalled from forgetfulness and already fulfilled somewhat by comradely unity, the proletariat turns toward a new order, new foundations, a socialism immeasurably improved yet in its main features not unlike original human nature. By contrast to this idea, the life of the bourgeoisie itself seems worthless. And being increased in numbers and with their hands on the productive machinery of all society, the proletarians know that they can make the idea a reality.

Psychologically—and even anthropologically and ethically—this Marxian formula has great power, if indeed all of its elements exist as prescribed. But on the contrary, if any of the elements is missing the formula is disastrous and takes us as far from fraternal socialism as can be. Now there is no question that point (*b*) is missing: that by and large over the last century in the advanced industrial countries the real wages of the working class as a whole have not lingered at the margin of *physical* subsistence and reproduction; they have advanced to a point where even revolutionary writers agitate for a "sociological standard of living" and cry out against "one-third of a nation" being ill-fed and ill-housed. (The reasons, of course, are the astounding increase in productivity, the need for domestic markets, and such gross profits that the rate of profit has lost paramount importance.) What has been the result?

The spiritual alienation of point (*a*) has gone even further, I suppose, than Marx envisaged. He followed the de-humanisation of production to the last subdivision of labour into an automatic gesture, but I doubt whether he (being sane) could have foreseen that thousands of adult persons could work day in and day out and not know what they were asking. He did not foresee the de-humanisation of consumption in the universal domestic use of stream-lined conveniences whose operation the consumer does not begin to understand; the destruction of even the free choices in the market-place by mass-advertising and monopolistic controls; the segregation among experts in hospitals of all primary experience of birth, pain, and death, etc. etc.

Yet it is not the case that these fractional persons, alienated from their natures, are brought sharply to look out for themselves by intolerable deprivation. On the contrary, they are even tricked, by the increase in commodities, into finding an imitation satisfaction in their "standard of living"; and the kind of psychological drive that moves them is—emulation! The demand of the organised proletariat for a living-wage and tolerable working-conditions, a demand that in the beginning was necessarily political and revolutionary in its consequences, now becomes a demand for a standard of living and for leisure to enjoy the goods, *accepting the mores of the dominant class.* (What are we to say of "leisure" as a good for an animal whose specific humanity is to be productive?) Then if these persons have gone over to the ideals of another class, it is foolish to call them any longer "proletarians" ("producers of offspring", as Marx nobly and bitterly characterised the workers); but given the apparently satisfied alienation from concern in production—and where do we see anything else?—it is also unjust to call them workers.

Marx saw wonderfully the emptiness of life in the modern system; but he failed to utter the warning that this emptiness could proceed so far that, without the spur of starvation, it could make a man satisfied to be a traitor to his original nature. What he relied on to be a dynamic motor of revolution has become the cause of treason.

Lastly, the scientific teachers of the masses are no longer concerned to recall us to our original creative natures, to destroy the inhuman subdivision of labour, to look to the bands of comrades for the initiation of direct action. On the contrary, their interest has become the health and smooth functioning of the industrial machine itself: they are economists of full employment, psychologists of vocational guidance, and politicians of administrative bureaux.

So far the psychology of the masses. But in the psychology of the bourgeoisie there is a correlated diference from what Marx envisaged. The Marxian bourgeois has the following characteristics: (*a*) Pre-occupied with exchange-value, with money which is featureless, he is alienated from all natural personal or social interests; this makes all the easier his ruthless career of accumulation, reinvestment, exploitation, and war. (*b*) On the other hand, he embodies a fierce lust. real even though maniac, for wealth and power. The conditions of his rôle are given by the economy, but he plays the rôle with all his heart; he is an individual, if not quite a man. The spur of a falling rate of profit or of closed markets, therefore, drives him on to desperate adventures.

By and large I do not think that this type is now very evident. Partly, to be sure, it is that the owning classes adopt a democratic camouflage for their protection; but the fact that they are willing to do this already shows that they are different men. Other factors seem to me important: (1) In absentee-ownership there is an emasculation of the drive for maximum exploitation of the labour and the machine; the owner does not have the inspiration of his daily supervision; he is not approached by inventors and foremen, etc.; but the salaried manager is usually concerned with stability rather than change. (2)

But even if the drive to improve the exploitation is strong, the individual capitalist is disheartened by the corporate structure in which most vast enterprises are now imbedded; he is embarrassed by prudent or timid confreres. (Government regulation is the last stage of this corporative timidity). (3) Not least, it now seems that even in peacetime there is a limit to the falling rate of profit; technical improvement alone guarantees an annual increment of more than 2%; by deficit spending the state can subsidise a low but stable rate of profit on all investment; there is apparently no limit to the amount of nonsense that people can be made to want to buy on the instalment plan, mortgaging their future labour. And in fact we see, to our astonishment, that a large proportion, almost a majority, of the bourgeoisie are even now ready to settle for Plans that guarantee a low but stable profit. Shall we continue to call them bourgeois? They are rentiers.

The more dynamic wolf, on the other hand, is no longer a private enterpriser, but increasingly becomes a manager and administrator of the industrial machine as a whole: he is in the Government.

II. SOCIOLATRY.

With the conclusions so far reached, we can attempt a formal definition of the mass-attitude that we call *Sociolatry* (after Comte).

Sociolatry is the concern felt by masses alienated from their deep natures for the smooth functioning of the industrial machine from which they believe they can get a higher standard of living. The revolutionary tension of the people is absorbed and sublimated by the interesting standard of living; but this standard is not physiological (which would be potentially revolutionary) nor is it principally economic, a standard of comfort and luxury (which would slow down the machine by breeding idleness, dilettantism, and eccentricity); it is a sociological standard energised by emulation and advertising. All men have—not the same human nature—but the same commodities. Thus, barring war, such an attitude of alienated concern could have a long duration. I say "barring war"—but we must ask below whether the war is not essentially related to the attitude.

On the part of the political elite: sociolatry is the agreement of the majority of the bourgeoisie to become rentiers of the industrial corporation in whose working they do not interfere; and the promotion of the more dynamic bourgeoisie to high-salaried, prestigious, and powerful places at the controls of the machine. Sociolatry is therefore the psychology of state-capitalism and state-socialism.

III. WHAT MUST BE THE REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAMME?

Still barring from consideration the threat of war, we must now ask: what is a revolutionary programme in the sociolatry? (By "revolutionary" I here refer to the heirs of Rousseau and the French Revolution: the conviction that man is born free and is in institutional chains, that fraternity is the deepest political force and the fountain of social invention; and that socialism implies the absence of state or other coercive power).

For if indeed, with the steady expansion of technical productivity, the attitude of the masses has for a century moved toward sociolatry and the attitude of the bourgeoisie towards accepting a low but stable rate of profit, then the Marxian programme is not only bankrupt but reactionary. The Marxian economic demands (for wages and conditions) cement the sociolatry; the Marxian political demands (for expropriation of the expropriators by seizing power) lead to state-socialism.

It is with diffidence and sadness that I here openly dissent from statements of Karl Marx. When I was young, being possessed of an independent spirit I refused to embrace the social science of Marx, but proceeded, as an artist and a human-being, to make my own judgments of the social behaviour I saw about. And then I found, again and again, that the conclusions I slowly and imperfectly arrived at were already fully and demonstrably (and I may say, beautifully) expressed by Karl Marx. So I too was a Marxist! I decided with pleasure, for it is excellent to belong to a tradition and have wise friends. This has to do with Marx as a social psychologist. As regards political action, on the other hand, I do not see, it has not seemed to me, that the slogans of the Marxians, nor even of Marx, lead toward fraternal socialism; rather they lead away from it.

Now (*still* barring the war!) there is a great advantage for the revolutionist in the existence of sociolatry and of even a tyrannical state-socialism. The "standard of living" and the present use of the machinery of production may rouse our disgust, but it is an ethical disgust; it is not the fierce need to act roused by general biological misery. We may therefore act in a more piecemeal, educational, and thoroughgoing way. The results of such action will also be lasting and worthwhile if we have grown into our freedom rather than driven each other into it. Our attack on the industrial system can be many-sided and often indirect, to make it crash of its own weight rather than by frontal attack. ("One of the Evil One's most effectual arts of seduction," says Kafka, "is the challenge to battle. It is like the fight with woman, that ends in bed.")

Nor is it the case that the absence of tension and despair makes it impossible to awaken revolutionary feeling. For we know that the society we want is universally present in the heart, though now generally submerged: it can be brought into existence piecemeal, power by power, everywhere: and as soon as it appears in act, the sociolatry becomes worthless, ridiculous, disgusting by comparison. There is no doubt that, once awakened, the natural powers of men are immeasurably stronger than these alien institutions (which are indeed only the pale sublimations of natural powers).

On the one hand, the kind of critique that my friends and I express: a selective attitude toward the technology, not without peasant features, is itself a product of our surplus technology; on the other hand, we touch precisely the vulnerable point of the system.

Then, as opposed to the radical programmes that already presuppose the great state and corporative structure, and the present social

institutions in the perfected form of the Sociolatry, we must—in small groups—draw the line and at once begin action directly satisfactory to our deep nature. (*a*) It is essential that our programme can, with courage and mutual encouragement and mutual aid, be put into effect by our own effort, to a degree at once and progressively more and more, without recourse to distant party or union decisions. (*b*) The groups must be small, because mutual aid is our common human nature mainly with respect to those with whom we deal face to face. (*c*) Our action must be aimed not, as utopians, at a future establishment; but (as millenarians, so to speak) at fraternal arrangements to-day, progressively incorporating more and more of the social functions into our free society.

1. It is treasonable to free society not to work at a job that realises our human powers and transcends the inhuman subdivision of labour. It is a matter of guilt—this is a hard saying—to exhaust your time of day in the usual work in offices and factories, merely for wages. The aim of economy is not the efficient production of commodities, but co-operative jobs themselves worth doing, with the workers' full understanding of the machines and processes, releasing the industrial inventiveness that is in each man. (Nor is it the case, *if we have regard to the whole output of social labour,* that modern technical efficiency requires, or is indeed compatible with, the huge present concentrations of machinery beyond the understanding and control of small groups of workers).

2. We must re-assess our standard of living and see what parts are really useful for subsistence and humane well-being, and which are slavery to the emulation, emotional security, and inferiority roused by exploitative institutions and coercive advertising. The question is not one of the quantity of goods (the fact that we swamp ourselves with household furnishings is likely due to psychic causes too deep for us to alter), but that the goods that make up the "standard of living" are stamped with alien values.

3. We must allow, and encourage, the sexual satisfaction of the young, both adolescents and small children, in order to free them from anxious submissiveness to authority. It is probably impossible to prevent our own neurotic prejudices from influencing small children, but we can at least make opportunity for the sexual gratification of adolescents. This is essential in order to prevent the patterns of coercion and authority from re-emerging no matter what the political change has been.

4. In small groups we must exercise direct political initiative in community problems of personal concern to ourselves (housing, community-plan, education, etc.) The constructive decisions of intimate concern to us cannot be delegated to representative government and bureaucracy. Further, even if the Government really represented the interests of the constituents, it is still the case that political initiative is itself the noble and integrating act of every man. In government, as in economic production, what is superficially efficient is not efficient in the long run.

5. Living in the midst of an alienated way of life, we must mutually analyse and purge our souls until we no longer regard as guilty or conspiratorial such illegal acts as spring from common human nature. (Needless to say, I am here referring to ethical discussions, not amateur psycho-analyses). With regard to committing such "crimes", we must exercise prudence not of inhibition but such prudence as a sane man exercises in a madhouse. On the other hand, we must see that many acts commonly regarded as legal and even meritorious are treason against our natural society, *if they involve us in situations where we cease to have personal responsibility and concern for the consequences.*

6. We must progressively abstain from whatever is connected with the war.

I am sensible that this programme seems to demand very great initiative, courage, effort, and social invention; yet if once, looking about at our situation whatever it is, we *draw a line* (wherever we draw it!), can we not at once proceed? Those of us who have already been living in a more reasonable way do not find these minimal points too difficult; can those who have all their lives taken on the habits (if not the ideas) of the alienated society, expect not to make drastic changes? If we are to have peace, it is necessary to *wage* the peace. Otherwise, when their war comes, we also must hold ourselves responsible for it.

IV. THE WAR.

The emergency that faces sociolatry and state-socialism is the War, and we know that this catastrophe of theirs must overwhelm us all. Is it a necessity of their system? Must one not assume, and can one not observe, that beneath the acceptance and mechanical, unspontaneous pleasure in the current social satisfactions there is a deep hatred for these satisfactions that makes men willing to rush off to armies and to toy with the idea of loosing explosive bombs?

(To put this another way: In a famous passage Freud pathetically justifies competitive capitalism as a means of releasing aggression without physical destruction. Now if, under improved economic arrangements of full-employment and non-competitive profits, this means of release is thwarted, how will the general aggression find an outlet—if the aggression itself is not moderated by small-scale fraternal competition, mutual aid, and instinctual gratification?)

We have defined a mass alienated from deep natural concerns, but occupying the conscious and pre-conscious with every manner of excitement, news, popular culture, sport, emulation, expenditure, and mechanical manipulation. Now let us draw from the individual psychology what seems to be an analogy, but it is more than an analogy.

When an ego-system is set up against the id-drives, rather than as the interpreter, guide, purveyor, and agent of those drives, then this ego is basically weak and "tends to destroy itself". Further, the more elaborate the distractions sought by the ego, the tighter is the defence and rationalisation against the instincts, the greater the tension, the

more suggestive and hypnotic the daily experiences, and the more inevitable the self-destruction. During the last years of his life, largely in order to explain the phenomena of war, Freud introduced into his theory the primordial death-wish. But whether or not, as is hotly debated among the analysts, such a drive is really primitive (in general a hunch of Freud is better than the clinical evidence of a lesser man)—nevertheless, to explain the tendency to self-destruction that we are here considering, no such primitive drive is required. On the contrary, the rebellion of the instincts against the superficial distractions of the ego is a healthy reaction: it is a healthy kind of violence calculated not to destroy the organism but to liberate it from inanity. To the ego, however, this desire to "burst" (Wm. Reich) might be interpreted as the desire for suicide—and if the ego can indeed control the movements of the body and the imagination, that is in fact the end of the organism.

Let us return to the real social context (for all individual psychology is an abstraction): we see on all sides an ill-concealed—concealed only to those who are expressing it—hatred for the social satisfactions. The most refined champions of our civilised arena, namely the technicians and practical scientists, seem almost the most inspired to feverish co-operative activity if once it has in it the promise of violence. Further, the people as a whole can the more cheerfully rush to the destruction of what they have and what they are, because, inspired to it *en masse* and suggesting it to one another, they release one another from the guilty restraint that each would feel by himself.

The behaviour of the Americans during the last interbellum was terribly significant. On the one hand, people were almost unanimously opposed to the coming war; there was even a certain amount of successful pacifist agitation (such as the barring of miltary training from many colleges). On the other hand, one economic and political action after another was committed that led directly to a world-wide war; and these acts were acquiesced in by the people despite the clear, demonstrative, and thousand times reiterated warnings from may quarters that the acts were heading towards a general war. It is absurd to claim that such warnings did not get a hearing, for the point is: why did they not? To me it seems that the public behaviour was exactly that of a person in the face of a danger that he consciously wants to flee, but he is paralysed because unconsciously he wants to embrace it: thus he waits and will not think of it.

But alas! this social violence that wants, not to destroy mankind, but only to get back to natural institutions, cannot be healthy, because it will in fact destroy us.

We others had better wage our peace and bring them quickly into our camp.

John Hewetson

Beethoven and Liberty

Writers on music seldom display interest or insight into political matters or questions of social organization. An adequate social history of music has yet to be written. On the other hand, those who do concern themselves with these matters tend to ignore æsthetics as mere dilettantism, too unimportant for their attention. Thus the social relations of an artist like Beethoven remain untouched by both types. True, some consideration has been given to the question by Marxist æstheticians. But their criticism is all too often marred by an over-mechanical interpretation which tends to fit the facts into a crude and immature theory. When we are told that Beethoven was thrown up by the French Revolution, or that he expressed the aspirations of the rising bourgeoisie, we can only smile at the inadequate simplicity of such explanations. In this essay I can only sketch the outlines for a study of the subject.

Beethoven had very definite ideas in relation to his social environment, and they affected his behaviour throughout his life. But in this respect he has been very ill-served by his biographers, partly for the reasons above, and partly because the Metternich régime necessitated a certain caution in discussing these matters. His later biographers exhibit the most commonplace conventionalism, often throwing more light on themselves than on their subject. Following the puritan Thayer, almost all of them find it necessary to apologize for Beethoven's conduct. They make the most absurd pleas that we should overlook his "moral lapses", and stress the nobility and high spiritual purpose etcetera of his works so that we should gloss over what they regard as the pettiness of his actions in life. It is the freedom from this kind of bourgeois humbug which gives distinction to the writings of Romain Rolland or J. W. N. Sullivan, to mention only two examples.

Beethoven's life span may have coincided with the period during which the bourgeoisie was consolidating the political gains conferred by the French Revolution. But this does not mean that he identified himself either consciously or unconsciously with the aspirations of the middle class, or, indeed, any other class. As a matter of fact, although no one was more contemptuous of the indolence and shallowness of the aristocracy than Beethoven, he equally despised the conventions and morals of the middle classes. "One must make a distinction between a bourgeois and a man of quality," he wrote. "I am reduced to the rank of the former." He was assuredly affected by

the events and social climate of his time, perhaps more so than any other musician. But he was very far from being dominated by them; he looked on men and life independently, and from a purely *human* standpoint, refusing to allow conventions and ideas which were based merely in the contemporary social structure, or the struggles of a new ruling class bent on securing political power, to affect either his outlook or his conduct in the least. This independence of thought is his outstanding characteristic. As Thayer says, he was "imbued with the democratic theories of the pre-romantics to which the ideas of the young American republic had given a new impetus." And he adds: "Beethoven the composer stood upon his own territory, followed his own tastes and impulses, wrote and wrought subject to no other control." In despair at the realization of his approaching deafness, he wrote, "I will take Fate by the throat; it shall not wholly overcome me." But this was not simply a reaction of despair. It was his general attitude, his philosophy of life.

Mozart, with his Masonic sympathies and his setting of Beaumarchais' social satire *Figaro,* was not untouched by the revolutionary trends at the end of his life. But he did not possess the positive attitude to life and the independence of thought which characterized the younger man. In general A. B. Marx is right when he says, "Between Mozart and Beethoven is the French Revolution."

The French Revolution spread all over the world ideas of equality and liberty, and also the conviction that rank and privilege were unjust. Beethoven was 19 when the workmen of Paris stormed the Bastille in 1789, and he undoubtedly accepted these ideas wholeheartedly, for he certainly applied them in his personal conduct. But outside France, other political factors came more and more to affect individuals in the changing society of the time. The threat which the Revolution offered to the existing *status quo* quickly caused the governments of the day to combine for the purposes of crushing France. "The Great Powers which had led the struggle against Napoleon had fought not only for an increase in territory, but also for a political principle . . . the governments of all the Allies were selfishly interested in many of the institutions of the Old Régime, and the war against France was therefore regarded as a war for eradicating the international revolutionary movement."[1]

Many progressive men and women besides Beethoven were ardent partisans of the revolutionary ideas—in England, Godwin, Blake and Paine, as well as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt and others, are examples. But these people were thrown into an increasingly difficult position as the war between nations gradually replaced and undermined the conflict of ideas. Revolutionary France, with its conceptions of equality and the universal brotherhood of man, gradually changed into a Nationalist State with imperialist ambitions as the bourgeoisie began to secure their political position at the expense of the working classes and peasants. Beethoven's changing attitude towards Napoleon reflected this interplay between

[1]Eduard Fueter, *World History* 1815-1920.

ideological conceptions and nationalist development. I shall return to this question later. For the present it is sufficient to have sketched —in a necessarily brief manner—the political background against which his youth was spent.

The net result of the wars against Napoleon was to deepen political reaction everywhere, for the close association which was formed between Austria, Russia, and Prussia afterwards, sought to "give effect to the policy of resisting liberalism and revolution. It was this so-called Holy Alliance which muzzled intellectual life in Germany, stamped out the constitutional movements of Italy, restored autocracy to Spain, refused to recognize the insurgent democracies of South America and came into stark collision with the more liberal philosophy of England at the Congresses of Troppau, Laibach and Verona."[2]

From a narrowly economic point of view the French Revolution affected Beethoven adversely. At Bonn, his employer, the Elector Max Franz—a brother of Marie Antoinette—was a man of liberal sympathies who by no means discouraged men of advanced social opinions, and he was generous in helping to advance the young composer's career. Count Ferdinand Waldstein, Beethoven's first patron, who had persuaded the Elector in 1787 to send the musician to Vienna to continue his studies under Mozart, in 1789 had managed to escape from Paris disguised as a horse-dealer. Beethoven soon had to return from his first visit to Vienna because, with his father's incompetence, his mother's death threw the responsibilities of the family on to his shoulders. But in 1792, when his brothers were grown up, the Elector granted him an indefinite holiday on full pay to go and work under Haydn. By 1794, however, the Revolution had ruined the Elector and Count Waldstein, and his support from Bonn ceased.

Despite this economic setback, Beethoven had already shown himself to be more than sympathetic to the revolutionary ideas. At Vienna the Emperor Franz I ruled through a multitude of police spies and informers. Beethoven held the indolence and inertia of the Austrians in contempt, and in 1794 he wrote that "as long as Austria has brown beer and sausages, she will never revolt." He spoke out on political matters with the greatest frankness, yet he was by no means unaware of the risks, for he wrote "We dare not speak too openly here, or the police will provide us with a lodging." In 1815, Nottebohm tells us, he made a note of the title of a book by Samuel Baur on the history of revolutions, and his library contained several books banned by the censor as dangerous to the State. It is amusing to find that these included not only Kotzebue's *Of Nobility,* Seume's *Journey to Syracuse in the year* 1802, and Müller's *Paris at the Zenith,* but also—the Apocrypha! They were all seized by the State at his death.

His teacher, Albrechtsberger, called him an "exalté libertaire," and his favourite reading was the *Augsburg Gazette,* which stood for everything that was regarded as subversive in ideas. In 1798, at a time when revolutionary France was very unpopular, Austrian society

[2]H. A. L. Fisher, *A Short History of Europe.*

shunned the French Ambassador, Bernadotte. Prod'homme tells us, however, that "Beethoven, who found the political and bureaucratic atmosphere of Vienna a very oppressive one, constantly went there."

To estimate Beethoven's independent attitude fully one must bear in mind the position which musicians before him accepted. Mozart and Hadyn, bewigged and dressed in court uniforms, were treated as lackeys. Beethoven, on the other hand, when he first went to Vienna the year after Mozart's death, was given a room by Prince Lichnowski in his palace. In addition to food and lodging, Lichnowski also gave him valuable stringed instruments, and Count Browne gave him a horse. Yet his need for independence was such that in 1795 he left the Lichnowski palace for furnished rooms. Nor did he conceal from his patron his equalitarian ideas. "Prince," he wrote to him, "what you are, you are by accident of birth; what I am, I am of myself. There are and there will be thousands of princes. There is only one Beethoven." Yet it was not pride which made him adopt this attitude, but his sense of individual human dignity. He was just as intolerent of undue deference to himself, and when the singer, Cramolini, sought to kiss his hand, he drew it quickly away with the remark "Do that to your mother." It was said of him that "the subjection of one man to another was painful to him."

He called the public audiences of Franz I "public deceptions," and when the Empress on one occasion commanded his presence at court, he replied that he was very busy, but he would try and come on the following day! To Prince Ludwig Ferdinand of Prussia he said, speaking of his piano playing, "You play, not like a king or a prince, but like a good pianist." Cherubini's wife relates that he jeered at the prejudices of the upper classes and always adopted the same manners to a duchess as to a bourgeoise. In later life, when the inflation of the Napoleonic wars had ruined many of the Austrian nobility he became more bitter, and scornfully wrote in his conversation book, "once the nobles lose their money they are done for; they become the slaves of courts in order to lord it over their fellows!"

But his attitude went much deeper than a mere intellectual opposition to the reactionary political trends of his day. He was intolerant of *all* restrictions on men's life and self-expression. Early in youth he had been irritated by clerical obscurantism and when the organist from the Chapel of the Minorites came to hear him play the organ, Beethoven exclaimed "Why does he not stay in his monastery at his prayer?" He showed the same instinctive realization that acceptance of religious discipline was destructive of individual development, when he asked a Franciscan monk who played the organ very well, how, with such a talent, he could resign himself to the life of the cloister? It has often been remarked that Beethoven treated God as an equal. His invocations of the deity are on the same plane as his attitude to nature and contain no trace of any conventional religious feeling. Indeed, in his religious music, particularly in the *Mass in D*, it is obvious that he is expressing his own views and feelings without any regard for the liturgical content.

It was this intolerance of external restraint that prevented him from throwing in his lot with any particular faction. Wegeler tried, without success, to persuade him to join the Freemasons, as Mozart had done. (*The Magic Flute* is a masonic opera). Holz states that Beethoven *was* a freemason, but he brings no authority for this statement and is the only one to make it. It probably arises from the fact that he moved in masonic circles, but it is significant that he did so at a period when "their lodges having been closed, the members could only meet secretly, which must have been a distinct attraction to such a born foe of rules and regulations."[3] His reading of advanced periodicals and his visits to Bernadotte were not accidental, for many of his contemporaries remarked on his keen interest in politics. "His judgement in political matters," wrote Seyfried, "showed a rare intelligence—a clear grasp of affairs and a habit of seeing things simply and directly. One could not have expected more from an accomplished diplomat living in the official world of politics." Naturally, he saw through the corruption and pretences of political life as easily as he saw through the effete and indolent aristocracy. Under the Metternich dictatorship which followed the Napoleonic wars he constantly denounced the régime—indeed, Gelinek declared that he would end on the gallows! Dr. Müller, writing in 1827, said that "Beethoven always spoke with the greatest frankness, even in public, on the question of the government, the police and the aristocracy." Needless to say, the authorities were aware of it, and in recent years much information about the composer has been gleaned from the police archives at Vienna. An imperial edict was issued which forbade the publication of any work of his unless it bore his signature, so that he took responsibility for it. Almost all his friends were watched as dangerous elements, and many of them were refused passports as a result of the reports which spies sent to Baron Hager, the Minister of Police, and his successor Sedlnitsky. Beethoven, of course, knew of this, for someone wrote in his conversation book regarding the Countess Erdödy, to whom he had dedicated his two trios in D major and E flat, op. 70, "the police know everything, even the Countess' life." This sympathetic and unhappy woman, to whom Beethoven wrote some of his most deeply felt letters, was compelled to live out her last years at Munich, having to apply to the police each year for a renewal of her passport.

The panic in ruling class circles which the French Revolution caused naturally went deeper and persisted longer in those States which were most rooted in the old régime. It was shortest in the United States of America, and longest in Austria. As Feuter says, "Austria, because of her own internal political interests, was compelled more than any other Great Power to fight against the movement for political revolution." It was for these reasons that the Austrian ruling class relied on the all-pervading police system.

In such circumstances Beethoven took a great interest in those

[3]Ernest Closson, *The Fleming in Beethoven*. The same writer, speaks of Beethoven's "Anarchist opinions".

who were persecuted by the police. He insisted on hearing from Schindler's own lips an account of what happened when the latter was put under arrest at Brunn for taking part in a students' demonstration. And he also took up the cudgels on behalf of another friend of his, the young Belgian Victor Coremans, whom Closson describes as "always agin the Government." When his radical French paper, *Le Spectateur*, offended Metternich and was suppressed, Coremans asked Beethoven to intervene. He did so, but without success. Coremans was constantly in trouble with the censors in Vienna, and in 1822 the police ordered him to leave the city. He went to Nuremburg to become joint-editor of the *Correspondant,* only to be expelled from Bavaria ten years later. Closson states that "Coremans emphasizes the fact that these political broils were largely responsible for the sympathy which Beethoven showed him."

It is worth pointing out here that most of the accounts of Beethoven by his contemporaries were written while the dictatorship was in full swing, and therefore the tendency was to play down his revolutionary and humanitarian sympathies. Thus Dr. Bach, Beethoven's legal adviser, strongly urged Schindler, in the first (1840) edition of his biography of the composer to be cautious on this point, and he merely referred to Beethoven's independence of character, adding that "we should put his political ideas in the same category, only *that would take us too far.*" In the subsequent editions, however, Schindler becomes more explicit: "Beethoven's sympathy with the First Consul (Napoleon)," he wrote, "was largely due to the fact that the new order of things were founded upon those republican principles to which, as a firm champion of perfect liberty and national independence, he felt himself most strongly drawn."

Enough has been said to show that Beethoven was not at all the visionary dreamer which he is often regarded as. He was affected by the economic needs of his time, and its revolutionary ideas. Hence he was resentful of the interference in individual lives which Metternich's tyranny imposed. But for his international reputation, his opposition to political oppression would undoubtedly have landed him in serious trouble.

All his life Beethoven was a republican. He had a bust of Brutus in his room. "The French Revolution had liberated thought," wrote Göllerich. "He (Beethoven) became the prophet of this freedom of the people. Had the true meaning of many of the works which he launched forth at the world at that time been understood, their performance would certainly have been forbidden. His revolutionary spirit came out in his music so that men who understood it were impelled to fight for freedom." He admired the young Bonaparte immensely and regarded him as embodying the libertarian and democratic ideals of the revolution. It was for these reasons that he dedicated the *Eroica* to him. The depth and strength of his feelings can be gauged from the fury with which he erased Napoleon's name from the title page when he learned that the First Consul had become Emperor. "He is only an ordinary man after all, even he!" he

exclaimed. "He also will trample men's rights under foot to satisfy his pride, raise himself above his fellows, become a tyrant!"

His position was similar to those people outside Russia who supported the Revolution of 1917, but found themselves increasingly disillusioned with the trend of Russian affairs. "Ever since France became an Empire, Beethoven detests the Emperor and the French." wrote Reicha to the Baron de Trémont. He absolutely refused in 1806 to play for some French officers at Lichnowski's house near Troppau. And during the French occupation of Austria after Wagram, he shook his fist at one in the street and declared to Rust "If I knew as much about strategy as I do about counterpoint they would have their work cut out!"

Yet he was far from being carried away by war fever, for he always detested war itself, and described a soldier as " A slave who sells his liberty for five kreutzer a day." When the French were besieging Vienna in 1809 he wrote to his publisher Breitkopf at Leipzig, "What an upheaval, what a desert all around me! Nothing but drums, cannon, horrors of every kind. I had begun to organize some gatherings for vocal music at my own house, but this horrible war has stopped everything." Nevertheless, he was active in trying to relieve the sufferings of the victims of the war, and after the Battle of Hanau he gave a concert of his works, devoting the proceeds to the relief of the relatives of those who were killed or wounded. Later on, when the Countess Erdödy's son died, the letter he wrote to her clearly recognizes the futility of wars. "May Heaven watch over you and not add to your sorrows, which are already so great; even if your health becomes still more shaken, *remember that your son would have had to go to battle, where he might have met death like millions of others,* and then remember that you are still the mother of two dear children of the fairest promise."

Perhaps his attitude emerges more clearly than anywhere else, however, in the *Dona Nobis Pacem* in the *Mass in D,* over which he wrote "A prayer for inward and outward peace." The orchestra menacingly suggests the stress of war with appalling power—"no listener," says Tovey, "can miss the meaning of those drums and trumpets." No other composer has so terrifyingly evoked the destructive and mindless powers of war, or prayed more vividly for peace.

Beethoven wrote down in his journal, "Love liberty above all things," and in a letter to the Archduke Rudolph, he said "Freedom, progress are the only goals, in art, as in nature." Love of liberty was the characteristic which his contemporaries most consistently noted in him. "Liberty is to him the greatest of all things, nothing in the world, neither temporal power, riches, birth, nor social rank, can affect him." (Weissenbach). It is inevitable that this consuming passion should emerge in his music. "What, above all, inspired Beethoven, apart from the pure and deep passion of Flärchen, was the love of liberty." This was written by Liszt, and Seywald finds the same "idea of liberty in all his symphonies from the *Eroica* to the Ninth." Beethoven was immediately drawn to subjects dealing with

the struggle for freedom—*Prometheus, Fidelio,* Goethe's *Egmont,* Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell.* And not only were the men and women of his day who lived and worked for freedom among his friends, but supporters of the *status quo* felt disquieted by his music. The critic Zelter, Goethe's friend, found his music immoral, and called his early oratorio *The Mount of Olives* "an unclean work."

Goethe himself, who said of the Holy Alliance that "nothing greater or more useful for mankind has been invented," was antagonistic to Beethoven and his work. When they met, however, he was compelled to recognize the greatness of the man, and he admitted that no one else had so caught the spirit of his poems and dramas. Beethoven on his part showed the most touching admiration—amounting almost to reverence—for Goethe, though he did not hesitate to criticize his deference to the nobility, declaring, "Goethe is much too fond of the Court atmosphere." Their difference in outlook is best illustrated by the famous story which Beethoven related in a letter to Bettina von Arnim in August 1812.

> "Yesterday on the way home we met the whole Imperial family. We saw them from afar approaching, and Goethe slipped away from me, and stood on one side. Say what I would, I could not induce him to advance another step, so I pushed my hat on my head, buttoned up my overcoat, and went, arms folded, into the thickest of the crowd—Princes and sycophants drew up in a line; Duke Rudolph took off my hat, after the Empress had first greeted me. Persons of rank *know* me. To my great amusement I saw the procession defile past Goethe. Hat in hand, he stood at the side, deeply bowing. Then I mercilessly reprimanded him, cast his sins in his teeth . . ."

In a similar story, while Goethe and Beethoven were out walking together, greeted at every step, Goethe rather pointedly remarked that he was tired of this constant bowing. "Don't be annoyed, Excellency," said Beetoven slyly. "Perhaps they are bowing to me!"[4]

How powerful an effect Beethoven's music exerted even on hostile critics is strikingly related by Mendelssohn. "In the morning I had to play to him (Goethe), for nearly an hour, music by the great composers in chronological order . . . He refused to let me mention Beethoven, but I told him I could not help it, and played the first movement of the C minor symphony. This moved him strangely. At first he said 'This does not cause any emotion, only astonishment; it is superb!' For a while he continued to growl in this way. Then after a silence, he went on: 'It is stupendous, absolutely mad. *It makes me almost fear that the house will collapse. And supposing the whole of mankind played it at once!*' "

The idea of freedom is the real subject of Beethoven's one opera, *Fidelio.* Powerful as the figure of Leonora is, the drama really centres round her husband, Florestan, imprisoned for political reasons, and it is his themes which recur in the great *Leonora Overtures.* Nowhere has the longing for freedom been more touchingly expressed than in the prisoners' chorus in Act I, or in Florestan's aria at the beginning of Act II. After the gloom and terror of the dungeon scene in which the Prison Governor, Pizarro, comes to kill the almost starving

[4]Romain Rolland. *Goethe and Beethoven.*

Florestan, the passion of freedom rises to a triumphant climax in the white blaze of the finale of the opera. Its power to influence people is recognised to-day, for *Fidelio* was forbidden in Belgrade during the war on the grounds that it deals sympathetically with political prisoners.

The same passion for liberty inspires the overture and incidental music for Goethe's play, *Egmont,* which tells of the struggle of the people of the Netherlands for independence. It was a subject near to Beethoven's heart, and one on which he felt very strongly, for when he was asked to write a piece on the Battle of Copenhagen, he replied that he would have to see the text first, for he would write nothing which detracted from the dignity of a freedom-loving people like the Danes.

It is in the light of all this that one must look at his much-abused *Battle of Vittoria for Orchestra,* which he himself described as "an absurdity," but which he had played over and over again. What one must remember is the significance which this battle had for its time. When Napoleon invaded Spain in 1808, and put his brother on the throne, the whole Spanish people rose against him. To Beethoven, bitterly hostile to the tyrant, they were fighting for freedom, and Wellington's armies were armies of liberation. And when, in 1812, at Vittoria, the English force succeeded in driving the last remnant of the French, together with King Joseph Bonaparte, over the Pyrenees, upholders of democratic and republican ideas must have felt triumphant. In Austria, which was itself so oppressively governed, joy at the final defeat of the French "occupying forces" must have been all the keener. No doubt the authorities in Vienna regarded the success of Beethoven's piece with dislike, but England being an Ally, they could hardly interfere! Indeed, it is probable that much of the success which this worst of all Beethoven's works received was actually due to the political symbolism involved, so that it became a rallying point for the approval of progressive people. Naturally, in such circumstances, Beethoven would repeat it as often as possible, even if it were not also a much needed financial success.

The composer communicated his passion for freedom to many of his friends also. Theresa von Brunsvik, whom at one time he intended to marry, and to whom he dedicated the Piano Sonata in F sharp major, op. 78, devoted her long life to the cause of progress. In this she was helped by her niece, Blanche von Teleki, the daughter of Carlotta Brunsvik who also was Beethoven's friend. Blanche did much work for liberal education, and was condemned to ten years imprisonment for her part in the Revolution of 1848. This event affected Theresa Brunsvik profoundly, and from then on she worked for the revolutionary movement. Another friend who supported the 1848 uprisings was Wilhelmine Schroeder-Devrient. She sang Leonora in the successful revival of *Fidelio* in 1822, and was mainly instrumental in ensuring its subsequent popularity.

But no one was more profoundly affected by Beethoven and his music than Bettina Brentano (Bettina von Arnim). Romain Rolland says of her that "She was *'Freiheitsbegeisterte'* ('intoxicated with the

ideas of freedom') to the end of her days." Her grand-daughter, Irène Forbes-Mosse, describes her as working ceaselessly in the cause of the victims of the social order. "Everything belongs to the people," she wrote to the Crown Prince of Würtemburg. "Let the Prince go lacking, but the people must be free from want." She agitated successfully against death sentences imposed on revolutionists such as Mieroslavsky and Kinkel. In 1847 she was imprisoned for two months on a charge of *lèse-majesté*. In the next year, however, she too supported the insurrections, writing in biting terms of the treachery of the king and of the heroism of the people.

In conclusion one must mention certain aspects of the Ninth Symphony—"the symphony with the revolution in the last movement," as it has been called by Clara Cole. Schiller originally called his *Ode to Joy* an "Ode to Freedom". Beethoven had been pre-occupied with the idea of setting it to music since his youth. "For thirty years these words—embodying in a kind of joint human and religious fervour the strongly revolutionary sentiments of 1785 when they were written—had been floating in Beethoven's mind; for thirty years he had tried to find music adequate to their expression."[5] The music itself leaves no doubt of the depth of Beethoven's own feeling for the brotherhood of man—feeling which is most poignantly expressed in his setting of the words:

"Seid umschlungen, millionen . . .
("Embrace, O ye millions . . .")

At the first performance of the symphony on May 7th, 1824, the audience was completely carried away, and there must have been fears of police intervention, for the composer received five rounds of applause at the end, though Royalty was only accorded three . . . The deaf Beethoven, standing beside the conductor, Umlauf, was completely immersed in the emotions aroused by his work; he did not hear the applause until Henriette Sonntag, one of the soloists, took his arm and turned him round to see the wildly cheering crowd.

After the financial crisis of the Napoleonic wars, Beethoven's patrons, with the sole exception of the Archduke Rudolph, fell away. Contemporary musicians like Weber and Spohr thought the music of his last period quite mad. But his radical opinions and his unconcealed contempt for the authorities made him still well known in Vienna; and it seems likely that the almost frantic enthusiasm with which the Ninth Symphony was greeted was at least partly an expression of the feelings of a people living under an oppressive dictatorship. Be that as it may, the people of Vienna must have felt that they had lost a friend when, on March 27th, 1827, a crowd of between twenty and thirty thousand people followed his coffin to the cemetery. "The death of Beethoven," his friend Zmeskall wrote to Theresa Brunsvik, "has caused an excitement at Vienna the like of which has never been known before. No Austrian Emperor has ever had a funeral like that of Beethoven."

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[5]Edward Carpenter, *Angels' Wings.*

Holley Cantine & Dachine Rainer

Letter from New York

The end of the war has left America physically uninjured, and at least to outward appearances, politically unchanged. Beneath the surface, however, important changes have taken place.

The war mentality of the American people has been a source of great misunderstanding and confusion: following neither the jingoistic hysteria of 1917-18, as most radicals apprehensively expected, nor anything approximating an active anti-war position. The prevailing attitude has been one of cynicism among the more sophisticated, while the majority has been apathetic, although to a surprising extent these two attitudes have been combined, even among people who are rela tively simple in their political reactions.

This state of mind is largely a reflection of the growing alienation between the people and the government that has been taking place since the early thirties as the result of the breakdown of the individual's economic responsibility and independence, and his increasing dependence on government handouts. No one is in a better position to understand the actual nature of the state than those who are forced to depend on its benefactions to avoid starvation, and at the same time no one is less able to resist it effectively. It had become a question of submission or starvation. In order to compensate for their individual feelings of guilt and inadequacy, the workers readily accepted the myth of Roosevelt, The Saviour of the Common Man, and the liberal pretensions of his administration, but their daily experiences with the relief bureaus and the WPA bureaucracy made them perfectly aware of how despotic the benevolence of the regime really was.

This shizophrenic tendency was amplified by the coming of war, a war in which the great bulk of the population had no great interest, and still less enthusiasm, but which they accepted passively partly because it provided them with jobs, but largely because they felt impotent to effect any control of the mechanism of the state and the course of events. The transition from peace to war consisted, on the economic level, of substituting war jobs whose uselessness was not immediately apparent for the palpably manufactured work of the Works Project Administration. Although the workers were not quite sophisticated enough to realize that their economic "salvation" was dependent on the existence of a permanent war economy, they were at least partially aware of the fact, and their feeling of insecurity about the impermanent nature of their jobs was at least as great as had existed on the projects. On the ideological level, the myth of Roosevelt

The Friend of the Common Man, easily gave way to the myth of Roosevelt the Commander in Chief of the victorious armies.

Despite of feverish efforts of the Office of War Information and similar agencies of government propaganda to whip up enthusiasm for the war and hatred for the enemy, the temper of the public remained apathetic (except for the excesses committed against the Japanese in California, which were, however, occasioned much more by direct economic motives than by racial or patriotic chauvinism). The OWI had almost unlimited resources in both money and prominent figures in every field of art. Nevertheless, the output of war propaganda was uninspired and insipid in comparison to the work being done in this field by the Germans and Russians in this war or to that which was turned out in this country during the first World War. There were no lack of radio programs, moving pictures, posters and popular songs designed to help win the war, but almost without exception they evoked no emotional response. The popular song writers were close to desperation in their frantic efforts to duplicate the success of such songs as "Over There" and even resurrected its author, George M. Cohan, who, with a last feeble burst of energy wrote a song which was, if possible, even worse than the average product.

The more sophisticated art forms suffered from the same mediocrity and dearth of inspiration. There has been nothing produced in this country to compare even with the poetry of Louis Aragon or the music of Shostakovitch. Whatever art existed to satisfy the cultural needs of the intelligentsia was imported. In poetry, there was a revival of Rimbaud, George and Rilke, with the books of the latter two being sold at Macy's, the largest department store in New York. Fifty-seventh Street (the painting centre of NY) was almost exclusively occupied by exhibitions of 19th and early 20th century European masters.

The Museum of Modern Art (which has a sturdy and conventionally petit-bourgeois patronage) followed the current imperialist interests of America in its special exhibits of Latin American and Mexican work; while special war photography and poster exhibitions indicated its current political affinities. Its ethics were blatantly nil: we recall that the famous Kaethe Kollwitz lithograph of young children with begging bowls, which had been executed in protest against the allied blockade of Germany after the First World War, and bearing the title "Brot!", was exhibited by the museum with a new title: "Look what Hitler is doing to the women and children of Europe!".

The two most advanced art museums in the city, the Museum of Non-objective Art and Art of This Century, have no real connection with America at all, since both their exhibitors and their visitors are almost all European refugees. The Bauhaus has re-opened in Chicago, but it too, for all the effect it has had on American art, might still be in Dessau—Moholy-Nagy and Leger are the leading spirits there.

The few major exhibitions of work by native American painters, like the one sponsored by the Pepsi-Cola company at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, have been so notably bad, and have provoked so

little enthusiasm even among American chauvinists, that the commercial art dealers have begun to unload their stocks of American paintings and are buying European work. There was an abortive (although intensive) attempt made during the war to interest the art public in American Primitives, but it has now diminished to a collector's game.

In the history of western civilisation, there has been a consistent correspondence between political, economic and cultural dominance. While America has emerged from the war as the dominant power politically and especially economically, its cultural contribution is virtually non-existent.

America now stands in relation to the rest of the world very much as England stood in relation to its colonial empire during the nineteenth century. The other two major powers are in ascendency and decline respectively. The position America has secured largely during the course of the war may be a very transitory phenomenon resulting from the fact that Russia has been temporarily retarded from rising to a dominant position by factors such as the devastation caused by the German armies. England's power is clearly declining with great rapidity and the remainder of the world is quite safely under American control.

In terms of material standards, the discrepancy between America and the rest of the world is really shocking. The shortages of goods caused by the war were here almost entirely in luxury items, and the black market was so widely ramified that it was not difficult to procure anything except nylon at prices that permitted everyone except the very poorest to satisfy their wants. Although the official and semi-official propaganda agencies carried on a vehement campaign against the black market operators, the public attitude was almost completely neutral, resembling very closely the attitude towards bootlegging during the Prohibition era.

As a result of black market operations, the official price ceiling was gradually raised; one might almost say that the black market constituted a semi-official mechanism for evading the implications of price control. The infrequent fines that were levied on those operators who were caught were no more than a minor business hazard, and did no more to discourage them than did the occasional raids that had been carried out by Prohibition agents during the twenties. The openness with which the black market functioned, was probably a strong contributing factor to the general cynicism of the people: it was both a cause and an effect of the apathy and indifference to the war.

The material prosperity of America rendered the people callous to the suffering that was going on elsewhere; everyone was too preoccupied with procuring a scarce item and beating the rationing system to worry about starvation in Europe. The only items here that were almost entirely unavailable during the war were nylon stockings, electrical appliances and rubber goods. Items that were occasionally scarce were butter, sugar, cigarettes. But these latter were almost always available, and at a very close approximation of pre-war prices.

The widespread hoarding by the average housewife of such items as canned goods and sugar indicated that these things were not scarce. It indicated a state of mind in which the housewife went from pre-war drudgery to drudgery of a more frenzied nature. Time was the most violated commodity. Hours were spent on lines by men as well as women (and as the cartoonists pointed out, frequently without any knowledge of what could be purchased at the end of them) and days were spent procuring items which in ordinary times would not have been considered. The techniques involved in making a purchase grew more autocratic: things were often bought already wrapped; the butchers grew prosperous and surly. It was, and still remains, a time of collective greed.

The trade union movement reflected the crude material interests of its membership. During the war, while they were earning relatively high wages, it was easy for the government and their own bureaucracy to saddle them with a non-strike pledge. The present wave of strikes is a manifestation of the same phenomenon in reverse; it represents a devil-take-the-hindmost attitude and is exclusively concerned with securing material gains. There is no evidence of class-consciousness or militancy on the part of the strikers, despite the desperate efforts of most left-wing parties to interpret them in a revolutionary manner. No trace remains of the former interest of the union movement in political and social issues, such as better schools and women's rights. It is a hollow form run for the benefit of the bureaucracy; their needs dictate the strategy of the hour. As long as moderately satisfactory wage levels are maintained, the membership is content to ask no questions.

On the other hand, it has become a commonplace of American radical journalsism that the trade-union membership can do no wrong: they have erected an abstract form of the working class, and interpret events in terms of this Platonic conception. This frequently leads to rather surprising results in practice. Thus, during the anti-Negro strike of the Philadelphia Transport Workers some time in 1945, Max Schachtman, the leader of one of the two major Trotskyist groups, wrote an "analysis" of the situation which concluded triumphantly by pointing out that if only the workers would do exactly the opposite of what they were doing, it would be a great working-class victory!

In general, radical comment on the present strike wave is fairly close to this level: the radicals do not dare admit too openly that the organised workers are acting from motives that have no possible revolutionary implications, since to do so would create the fatal impression that radicalism and the trade union movement are not organically linked; and would necessitate a drastic revision of radical tactics, which have consisted of boring from within the unions for the past ten years or more. In order to retain their theories about the revolutionary role of the trade unions, with special reference to the CIO, they must increasingly ignore the actual behaviour of the workers, and blame everything that cannot be ignored on the union bureaucracy, which is usually represented as coercing the rank and file to act against its interest. From this it conveniently follows that the radical's goal should

be to replace the present corrupt bureaucracy with a revolutionary one; at the same time they find it expedient to pretend that they have no ambitions for themselves.

A considerable amount of so-called leftish activity thus consists of an involved game of political manipulation within the trade union bureaucracies, with the various factions of the movement jockeying for strategic positions. They have evolved an elaborate metaphysics to protect themselves from the consciousness of having sold out to the existing bureaucracy—they are simply biding their time until the proper revolutionary situation arises, when they will utilize their strategic posts to manipulate the workers into socialism. Unfortunately, however, the strategic posts so arduously gained seldom afford any direct contact with the rank and file of the union, so that even assuming the eventuality of a revolutionary situation (than which nothing seems less likely at the moment) the "radical" bureaucrats would be in no position to influence the course of events in any direction, least of all in the direction of a classless society.

At present, the trade union membership is declining somewhat owing to the falling off of employment; once again a considerable number of workers are living off the "benevolence" of the state—this time under the custody of unemployment insurance. As a matter of fact, the great increases in the membership of the unions during the war was largely an artificial and unhealthy growth, resulting from such policies as the check-off and the closed shop contact. The check-off is one of the most blatant forms of class collaboration; it makes the collection of union dues a function of the paymaster of the factory; at first it appears incomprehensible how the unions could have adopted such an institution, but when one examines the close inter-relationship between the union bureaucracies and the factory managers, it ceases to be surprising.

The closed shop contact was originally a militant technique in the class struggle; but the general decline of militancy has left it as a device for coercing ignorant and even unwilling workers to pay union dues, without any comprehension of what the original purpose of unionism was. The system of the closed shop along with that of the check-off establishes the union as a permanent institution (beyond any dissolution) for coercing and corralling the workers. Although not yet completely subservient to the state, the present labour unions are rapidly assuming the proportions of an official Labour Front.

One of the most persistent myths of the radical movement is that totalitarianism destroys the trade unions. What actually happens is that the unions become state instrumentalities, while retaining a form that at one time represented opposition to the state. While in Germany, the Nazis found it necessary to arrest and persecute the militant trade union leaders, they did not abolish the trade union movement; on the contrary, it became incorporated into the state (with Nazis replacing the old leaders) and was utilized as one of the most potent propaganda outlets for Nazi ideology. In America today, class antagonisms are not nearly as sharply developed as they were in pre-

Hitler Germany, and in the transition to totalitarianism the existing trade union leaders will probably be retained.

The existing strike wave can best be understood as momentary letting off of steam by the workers, with the union bureaucrats controlling the valve, ready to shut it off the moment the workers show any signs of getting out of hand. The workers, however, show no such signs. Militancy has never been lower, despite the great prevalence of strikes.

Roosevelt's death, and the succession to the presidency of Truman has increased the general apathy and cynicism. Truman seems entirely incapable of the subtlety that made it possible for Roosevelt to create such a powerful myth around himself. He is just another politician of the old school, with a background of middle-western machine politics, and little initiative or imagination.

The Atomic Bomb has provided an objective basis for the prevailing attitude of political apathy and personal futility. From a humanistic standpoint, we might like to believe that the Bomb is responsible for the hectic materialism, the anti-intellectualism and cultural indifference of the American people, but unfortunately these things existed for so long before the advent of the Bomb that it comes as an anti-climax.

Julian Symons

The Condemned Playboy

I

A drawing of the author by Augustus John is presented as a frontispiece, and acts also as an introduction, to Mr Connolly's book of essays*: a round, large head rests on a plump hand, under thick brows the eyes belie the face's heaviness with a stare of glassy idealism, a romantic yearning for the infinite. The drawing is an admirable critical introduction to what is hardly a book of criticism: it reveals with almost distressing frankness a poet who cannot write a poem, a hedonist with a guilty conscience, a condemned playboy. In the pebbles of the eyes lies the immeasurable sadness of an artist egoist who is able to take nothing, not even himself, seriously.

The message of the frontispiece is repeated, with characteristically amiable self-depreciation, in the official Introduction. "Like most critics I drifted into the profession through lack of moral stamina: I wanted to be a poet, and to revive the epic; I wanted to write a novel about archaic Greece—but my epic and my novel fell so short of the standards which my reading had set me that I despaired of them and, despairing, slipped into the interim habit of writing short-term articles about books." It is not true to say, however, as Mr. Connolly does a line or two later on, that "That is how most of our critics are formed": it is, instead, how our book-reviewers are made. Throughout his Introduction Mr. Connolly is very modest about his virtues as a critic: but he seems not to be in doubt that he has produced a book of literary criticism. Since many reviewers agree with him on this point, it is necessary to say that they have all been deceived: this is not a book of literary criticism, nor is Mr. Connolly primarily a critic. *The Condemned Playground* is marked

*_The Condemned Playground_ by Cyril Connolly. Routledge, 10/6.

off in about the proportion of one part literary criticism, two parts journalism, two parts mild social satire, and one part autobiography: it shows its author most frequently as a highbrow journalist with a wide reading, a pleasant style, and a keen sense of the ridiculous.

II

These statements can easily be justified by analysis of *The Condemned Playground* into its component parts. Let us take first of all the most accomplished and in some ways the most congenial Connolly—the social satirist. The second section of *The Condemned Playground* contains some lightweight and amusing notes on novels and reviewers, a parody on Huxley and another on military experts, several odds and ends like "Felicity" and "Felicity Entertains" (which, if my memory serves me, appeared in the short-lived *Night and Day* and have an appropriate *New Yorker* tone—"Wendy sloshes his sherry about, brings it up to his nose, sips it, throws his head back as if he's going to gargle—and pours it into the soup"), and "Where Engels Fears To Tread", a mock-history of an aesthete's conversion to the Communist Party. These pieces show an astonishing adroitness in catching and caricaturing the tone of a period: they are often very funny, and they are written with a verbal good taste that makes even the slightest of them run smoothly. Mr. Connolly has an acute eye for absurdity, whether he is writing in parody of the would-be working-class poets of the thirties:

> M is for Marx
> and Movement of Masses
> and Clashing of Classes
> and Massing of Arses

or describing the early life of his comic aesthete:

> "Home. Background. Mother.
> 'Mother, who is that horrible old obesity with the black chin?
> I believe he's following us.'
> 'Hush, that's Daddy.'
> And so dawned my second birthday."

The pattern and irrelevance of his humour is derived from Ronald Firbank, and he has turned to his own comic uses bits of the manners of several writers: but the tact and taste with which these bits are put together transforms them, so that his humour does come through as something quite distinctive, and unlike that of anyone else writing today. At its worst his writing in this kind is deliberately arch, at its best it is not quite witty; but there is room for a great variety of accomplishment between the poles of Barrie and Congreve, and Mr. Connolly, if he could exert himself, and cared for the label, could be firmly fixed in the lists of English humourists. But here one encounters one of the contradictions of this involved and divided personality: for Mr. Connolly, whose slightly satirical humour is directed against aesthetes, moneyed snobs, cultured snobs, wine and food experts, is himself part of the fashionable literary world which he chastises severely with whips of feathers. Moreover, he does not regard himself as a humourist simply—he is also by intention a literary critic, a philosopher, a picture-fancier, and generally a man of fashionable culture. This personal involvement blurs the point of his sketches: one is borne along very pleasantly from paragraph to paragraph, one laughs occasionally and giggles a great deal; but when one has finished reading, the prevailing impression is that of watching an acute intelligence working, brilliantly enough, in a medium where it is not happy.

This impression is increased when one looks at the samples Mr. Connolly has reprinted of that highbrow journalism for which he is best-known. There is plenty of ingenuity, and plenty of humour in these reviews; they are all very readable: but they are also all very superficial. Mr. Connolly frequently carries over the manner of his social satires into his reviewing, with less happy results:

> "I remember very well sitting round the camp-fire one night when Tenderfoot and 'Goo-Goo' (who was then going native) were 'doing' a book . . . 'This book,' said Goo-Goo, 'has genius, and not only is it a work of genius—of passionate intellectual sincerity and emotional directness—but it comes very near to being the best novel of the month.' "

Is there a faint smell of *Punch* about? The superficiality is more clearly shown in the essays that attempt to be serious. A gossipy piece, written in 1943, on the writing going on in 1843, has some good quotations; but the very *idea* of writing such a piece, partly catalogue and partly whimsy, is essentially journalistic: and a journalist's idea finds its suitable phrases. "A period in which the conception of life as it might be is hurled against reality like a wave which breaks against black rock into a scintillation of diamonds—such is the century of Flaubert and Baudelaire." Such, one may fairly say, is the slick phrase a highbrow journalist offers us instead of a serious critical conception. Or consider: "If 1843 has a lesson for us today, it should be that of all forms of appeasement the most tragic is the appeasement by an artist of his own genius, when, after the compromise, only talent remains". Mr. Connolly turns a sentence very gracefully: but it is a trivial idea of literature that permits one to draw morals, and make comparisons between one century and another, without comparing the ethical, aesthetic and economic climates of the separate periods. It is trite, but true, to say that the artist's social and economic position, and his psychological makeup, have changed so much during the last hundred years that any comparison of this kind cannot be more than trivial.

But to get a proper view of the arch sentimentality which is the reverse side of Mr. Connolly's urbanity, the reader must look at the autobiographical essays which, by a piece of wonderfully bad judgment, have been included in this book—must look particularly at "England Not My England", a curious diary kept from 1927 to 1929, the notes on visits to Greece in 1933 and Spain in 1936, and the lecture on "French and English Cultural Relations". By using some quotations one can plot Mr. Connolly's spiritual progress from 1927 almost to the present time:

1927 "Life is thrilling."

"To be obtained before I am twenty-five: £1,000 a year, a book published, a Spanish mistress, some fame, more friends, a knowledge of German, and a visit to Cadiz."

1928 "Terrible *envie* for Paris. The cafés, the lights, the crowded warm interiors, the wasters, the artists, the drunks, the sense of liberty and rebellion."

"Resolve: to be more of an artist and a Bolshevik, to write a lot and go to Paris and live in Montparnasse."

1929 "Resolve: to be altogether more advanced and intelligent."

"England is a problem: parts of it so beautiful, a few people in it so intelligent, yet never can I manage to fit in."

1935 "The boredom of travel! . . . If you knew how bored we were in Athens."

1936 "One thing that is perfectly clear, after seeing Barcelona, is that, in any ultimate sense, it cannot be conquered."

"Why did half a million people turn out in the rain on this occasion, marching in silence twenty-five abreast, climbing up trees, crowding the windows to see this man's (Durruti's) coffin carried on its six-hour journey by the pall-bearers? . . . It seemed that if one could get the answer, penetrating beneath the verbose eulogies, one would understand something of the Spanish revolution."

1940 (?) "Any investigation of the artist's circumstances reveals that by far the most favourable conditions for him are neither at the top nor the bottom, but snug in the heart of the bourgeoisie, with a safe middle income."

1943 "Aragon is reputed to be in Switzerland; wherever he is, he is in danger; let us fetch him out. Eluard and his family should be rescued. Malraux would be invaluable; and Valéry."

". . . till by Saint-Tropez I reach the sea. There for several months I shall lie on the beach without moving, like a lump of driftwood."

The progress is a typical one: as typical, and as easy to caricature, as the pilgrimage of Mr. Connolly's mock-aesthete "From Oscar to Stalin". But my purpose is not to caricature, but to show the tones of reality. The progress resolves itself into three stages. First, the sensitive, ambitious young man,

alternately exhilarated and depressed by his own weakness and lack of seriousness; admiration of the artistic Bolshevik, Rimbaud, breeds the desire to be advanced and live in Montparnasse. Then the boredom of travel, and the miscarriage of a social conscience, sired by political ignorance out of sentimental goodwill (how typical is the reduction of political ideas to personalities implied in the quotation about Durruti). And after that, the third stage, the stage of maturity: extinction of that rebellious spark of Bolshevism, reconciliation to one's own position "snug in the heart of the bourgeoisie", hysterical demands that "we' (but who?) should rescue artists from danger so that they can nestle snugly by "our" side in the warm heart (but perhaps they wouldn't wish to do so?); and at last the loglike life of pleasure, lying on the beach supported by an air-cushion of lobster patties and champagne.

A literary playboy's progress: and an unsatisfying one, even to the playboy himself. With a deft sentence he punctures his own balloon: "I exist only to celebrate my sense of guilt".

III

There is little to be said about Mr. Connolly as a literary critic. The essays on Joyce, Gide, Swift, Sterne, Housman and some other writers, on which he stakes a claim to the name of critic, are informed by wide reading and sensitiveness, like all his writing: but they conspicuously lack a historical sense, or any standard of values by which to assess literature. Mr. Connolly frequently proclaims, indeed, that art is a kind of end in itself, and the artist a kind of saint: but if he is an easy hedonist, he is an uneasier mystic, and he slips quickly from this view into an unhappy joking deprecation of art as an attempt "to make unbreakable toys of the mind, mudpies which endure"—an attempt which is, he confesses, doomed to failure in our time. Such contradictions in viewpoint do not make for mature judgment or startling illuminations: and as a critic Mr. Connolly is both unmethodical and pedestrian. Sometimes, indeed, he is surprisingly imperceptive—as in his portentous, irrelevant destruction of Housman as a classical poet: and he never strikes off those sparks of insight about a book or a writer that are the mark of fine criticism. When we read Mr. Eliot on the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights, Mr. Yvor Winters on verse structure, or Mr. Edmund Wilson on James and Flaubert, Dickens and Kipling, something positive is added to our knowledge of literature and of individual writers. Mr. Connolly can never offer such insights: he makes instead comments and generalisations which are light, amusing and generally superficial. His highest reach of criticism is not very far removed from the general run of his book reviewing.

But if Mr. Connolly's book does not repay study because of its critical merits, it is not without interest to consider the course by which this lively and talented reviewer has reached his present eminence, as an acknowledged princeling in the smart, slightly moneyed Mayfair or Bloomsbury or Chelsea literary upper-world which has a vested interest in culture. Mr. Connolly is indeed an important, because he is such a thoroughly typical, figure: the very weaknesses of indecision and lazy eclecticism which have checked his critical and creative talent, make an irresistible appeal to the bourgeois *rentiers* who are the backbone (if many bodies, each of them spineless, can in mass form a backbone) of *Horizon*. That schizophrenic-like indecision, which is now so widespread among the intelligentsia that it may be called their characteristic neurosis, lends to its victims the illusion of strength obtained from an attitude which acknowledges, and celebrates its own inconsistency. It is a psychological attitude which, while finally disastrous to the emotional equilibrium, temporarily gives the literary schizophrene the luxury of embracing two contradictory beliefs at the same time. He can simultaneously applaud the totalitarian thought of Rimbaud and quiver with liberal sentiment about Spain; he can attack snobbism and be at the same time a snob of culture and good taste; he can satirise the aestheticism which he practises; he can speak from standards of value which he does not possess; he can applaud the art which he knows to be the fagend of a civilisation.

"I exist only to celebrate my sense of guilt." Always, with Mr. Connolly, one comes back to that: to the fact that, one day in the seven, he realizes

that the literary playground is condemned. There is no armour against the prick of reality, except that complete self-delusion which it is Mr. Connolly's besetting virtue not to experience: sensitiveness is not enough, humour is not enough, even the mudpies of art are not enough. The playboy can put away reality for long periods, but it comes hauntingly back; and every time it brings doubt of those "spiritual values" on which he would like his life to have been based. There is a passage in *The Condemned Playground,* which is not written about the author, but which is nevertheless peculiarly applicable to him. It might, indeed serve as his testament:

> "We stood aside from the conflict, with the result that in the twentieth century our art and literature became even more unreal: the fanciful pastime of well-to-do middle-aged children who had refused to grow up, and who could never hurt themselves because whenever they fell it was always on a thick green lawn."

It is a testament and also an epitaph: an epitaph for a generation of art-fanciers, and for their princeling, the Condemned Playboy.

Roy Fuller

From Phiz to Fildes

As Mr. Edmund Wilson has observed, there has been little serious criticism of Dickens in this country—Mr. T. A. Jackson's book is a notable exception—and the reason he gives for its absence, that Dickens' enormous popularity with and absorption by the middle classes has blinded the intelligentsia to his genius, is, within limits, perfectly true—provided we date the popularity and absorption back to the last century. It seems to me doubtful whether Dickens is now much more popular than Trollope, or the Brontës. Some of Dickens' conceptions may still be household words, but lipservice is the main tribute paid to them. However, the neglect of Dickens as a serious novelist springs in no small degree, I think, from the distaste which contemporary critics like Bagehot felt for the novels after *Chuzzlewit,* a legacy which they bequeathed (together with a slightly patronizing appreciation of the early Dickens vigour and humour) to succeeding generations of critics. Literary criticism short of the first-rate feeds on itself: the effort of re-reading and formulating a new conception of the whole work of an author is an effort which many critics are not able to make. Consequently, even now, there is a tendency to underrate the later Dickens' novels, there is still an inadequate general understanding of Dickens as a major writer who developed from novel to novel, and whose work demands to be considered as an organic whole.

This partial view of Dickens has been helped, too, in its persistence by the curious history of our biographical knowledge of him. The idealised picture of Dickens in Forster's *Life* (1872-4) held until the sneers and debunking of the twenties. Two books which are of great importance in the understanding of Dickens' family affairs were not published until 1935 and 1939, and it was only in 1938 that an adequate edition of the letters became available. The Ellen Ternan silently mentioned in the first clause of Dickens' will (which was printed as an appendix to Forster's *Life*) remained for years a mere name, and is, even now, a shadowy figure; and the episode of the blacking warehouse has only just emerged in its proper proportions from the mists of legend.

It is to the credit of the new biography of Dickens by Dame Una Pope-Hennessy (*Charles Dickens.* Chatto & Windus, 21s.) first, that she has no prejudice against his Radicalism or realism or unpleasantness, that she

evaluates the later novels as seriously as the earlier; and secondly, that she relates the hitherto tangled parts of his life with as much clarity and detail as we are now likely ever to get. It is a significant comment on the state of the literature about Dickens that these qualities still cannot be taken altogether for granted seventy-six years after his death. Dame Una's biography is the first to be founded on the monumental Nonesuch edition of the letters; as such, and because of its painstaking detail, it can now be regarded as the standard life. But it is a far from satisfactory work.

The chief objection to it must be, finally, Dame Una's own attitude towards literature. The shortcomings of that attitude are exacerbated by the sketchy state of Dickens criticism. Even Mr. Wilson, in a mere essay ('Dickens: the two Scrooges' in *The Wound and the Bow*) felt compelled fairly recently not only to trace the development of the novels but to outline the life: the want of a weighty *critique* to accompany the full-length biography and the detailed accounts of the novels' plots in Dame Una's book is felt very seriously indeed. The inclusion need not have lengthened the book, for it has many irrelevancies. On page 426, for example, there is an extensive anecdote about Lincoln which is related merely because Dickens once met Lincoln's Secretary of War. On page 396 there is another about Sir Stratford Canning told with even less justification. There are too many passages of this sort: 'To have qualified for the gallery at twenty was a minor triumph, but could anyone have guessed that it could be a way of catching up with Makepeace Thackeray?'.

It is not that Dame Una has not read Mr. Wilson and Mr. Jackson: she has read them and, in a queer way, respects them—indeed, some of her more intelligent remarks about the novels seem to be inspired by Mr. Wilson, to whom she (evidently) refers as a critic who has viewed Dickens as 'a man living his life in a trauma' (sic). But when, in discussing Dickens' fiction, she gets to the point when we cry out for an illuminating remark, for some conclusion even though we might disagree with it, she generally tails exasperatingly and uncertainly off. Having rejected, for instance, most of the extant solutions of *Edwin Drood* (including Mr. Wilson's, which alone makes her remarks coherent) she concludes: 'What then was Dickens up to in constructing this story, every sentence of which is loaded with meaning, every word of which is significant? He has never written in this precise, intensely careful way before. What does it all mean? The mystery cannot lie in the identity of the killer, but in the character and mentality of Jasper himself.' As for Mr. Wilson's side of the house, though Dame Una has gone to great trouble to recreate the literary friendships, the superficial *scene* of Dickens' world, she makes no attempt to continue or deepen the disclosure of the relations between the novels and the politico-social Victorian age that was such a notable feature of *Charles Dickens: The Progress of a Radical.*

Dame Una's reply to these charges would be, I suppose, that her aims in *Charles Dickens* were entirely other. But her lack of a fundamentally satisfactory viewpoint of Dickens as a literary artist, or of the novels as a psycho-social product, leads her into emphases or absence of them which seriously affect what one imagines her aims to be. For example, to relate the blacking warehouse episode without documenting it as fully as possible with Dickens' recorded emotions about it, without mentioning the famous 'spasms', is to make some of Dickens' work and subsequent life incompletely understandable. Forster is much sounder on this. Again, it is not of much help to approach the separation of Dickens and his wife, and his love for Ellen Ternan, from the attitude of a slightly-amused, well-balanced spectator; to point out that in this Dickens was an exhibitionist, behaved outrageously towards Mrs. Dickens and the rest of it. (In fact, one of the chief planks of Dame Una's condemnation of Dickens' action in 1857, the 'intimate' letters of 1853 to Mrs. Dickens, seems to me very thin. But the whole book could have stood more quotation from the letters generally: time and again, in the interesting pedestrianism of Dame Una's narrative one is forgetting what Dickens is really like, when an extract from a letter or a novel brings

one up with a start against Dickens the highly-conscious literary artist).

There is one important thing, of course, to be said in favour of Dame Una's somewhat Philistinian attitude: she presents the facts, on the whole, conclusively and fairly, and she is not trying to make a case, and her biography, together with the Nonesuch letters, can now be left to take care of, to sort out, the Dickens myth. Future critics will, one hopes, confine themselves to the largely unworked mine of the novels, the occasional pieces and the letters themselves, as literature, in detail, and in relation to their social and psychological background.

How rich the mine is one constantly rediscovers. Pursuing one of Dame Una's quotations, I began to re-read *Our Mutual Friend*. The virtuosity is astonishing. All the observation and comic brilliance of *Pickwick* is there (Mrs. Podsnap: 'neck and nostrils like a rocking-horse'; Lady Tippins: 'an immense obtuse drab oblong face, like the face in a tablespoon . . . a certain yellow play in (her) throat, like the legs of scratching poultry'; some old men at dinner 'screwing' claret slowly into themselves) but so forced that one is simply unable to believe that it can be sustained. It is, of course; and eventually takes on, against the beautifully-composed mouldering background (which is the accompaniment to all the late Dickens novels) and the pervading contempt and hatred, the nature of a profound criticism of human nature as a whole. So that the character which human beings show to others, that we now conveniently label 'Dickensian', assumes a significance which is as far removed from the simple humours (in the Johnsonian sense) of a Weller or a Fagin as are (to take a lower but no less striking example) the illustrations of Fildes from those of Phiz. The apotheosis of all art which deals with the external behaviour and appearance of the human being is surely the Dickensian character.

What compelled Dickens to start, in *Boz* and *Pickwick*, on this brilliant but exhausting method of depicting his world—which required every character, however minor or ephemeral, to be brought to vivid, individual life? In the end it became as laborious as Frankenstein's animation of his monster: what, apart from the demands of his huge audience, kept Dickens at it? What are the sources of the absolutely right and telling word or phrase which Dickens rummages for and produces—even in the most unlikely circumstances and for the most unpromising characters—always? What is the precise nature of Dickens' general (as opposed to his specific) social criticism? What is the nature of his moral criticism, that great strength of the Victorian novel which was unable to carry political criticism to its logical conclusion?

Reading Dame Una's book, these are some of the idle questions one asks (in her jesting-Pilate manner, alas!) oneself. They drive one back to the novel, to Mr. Jackson's book and Mr. Wilsons' article, and to the hope of new and leisured critical examinations. Dickens has a large relevance, too, to the novel as we know and try to write it today. Mr. Julian Symons has asked for a detective story which shall also be socially critical: that was a timely and reasonable request. Dickens, for whom crime was a symbol of the individual's position in bourgeois society, and who laboured to depict both criminal and society, gave many hints of how to write it.

The Future of NOW

For the past five years *NOW* has preserved an irregular existence, appearing at long intervals, subject to paper and printing difficulties and to the vicissitudes of the editor's own life. Nevertheless, we feel that *NOW*'s thirteen issues, in two series, have presented not merely a sound basis for libertarian values, but also published a fair proportion of the best writing during that period.

Among *NOW*'s poets in these irregular issues have been George Barker, Roy Fuller, Kathleen Raine, Frederick Prokosch, Charles Madge, Oscar Williams, Ruthven Todd, Nicholas Moore, Lynette Roberts, Alan Rook, Emmanuel Litvinoff, Keidrych Rhys, Philip O'Connor, E. E. Cummings, Francis Scarfe, Alex Comfort, Julian Symons, Kenneth Rexroth, Louis Adeane, Harry Brown, H. B. Mallalieu. Among its prose writers, in addition to some of the poets already named, have been George Orwell, Herbert Read, Henry Miller, D. S. Savage, John Middleton Murry, Julian Huxley, James Hanley, Rhys Davies, Maria Kuncewicz, Dwight Macdonald, Victor Serge, Jean Rollin, Camillo Berneri, Paul Goodman. These names speak for themselves.

This is the last of the irregular issues of *NOW*. Arrangements have been made for regular publication. The first issue of the new series will appear early in January, to be followed every other month, making six issues a year. We shall continue to stand for the same values as we have always supported. We shall not be afraid to discuss serious matters seriously, or to criticise where criticism is needed. A team of capable writers will provide regular reviews of books, paintings, plays, ballet and films. We shall publish the best we can find in articles, stories and poems by the most vital writers of the day, and each issue will contain reproductions of paintings, etc.

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